Patchworks of Care

ETHICS AND PRACTICE OF CARE IN THE ORGANIC FOOD MOVEMENT IN LATVIA

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Contents

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Abstract

This study explores the everyday work, ideals and values of the Latvian organic food movement known as *tiešā pirkšana* (TP, meaning 'direct purchasing'), an initiative which aims to shorten the physical and symbolic distance between producers and consumers; producers, market and regulating policies; and consumers and food. Drawing on the empirical material obtained through long-term ethnographic fieldwork, and theoretical discussions in social and food research, the concept of 'reconnection' was chosen to analyse the process of shortening the distance between the different actors involved in one small-scale food provisioning system. By focusing on the notion that there is a link between the reconnection process and the ethics and practice of care, the thesis analyses different forms of care in the various stages of food provisioning in the TP movement.

The notion of 'patchworked spatiotemporalities' is introduced in order to depict how care in the TP movement facilitates connections, reconnections and disconnections that involve caring actors and care acts, and the environments and materialities they are embedded in or affected by. Generational and gendered relationships, the relationality between human and non-human actors, and relations between producers, policies and markets are constantly negotiated, reconfigured and maintained in such spatiotemporalities.

By analysing movement's three main values – friendship, volunteerism and organicity – this study shows that the ethics and practice of care in the TP movement are closely entwined and must be viewed as a whole. Simultaneously, however, the perceptions and experiences of values, ideals and motivations differ among the various movement participants. Nevertheless, for the movement to be able to continue its work, the balance between various registers of ethics and practice of care must be constantly revisited and negotiated.

Special attention in the dissertation is paid to care acts that are performed to keep the TP movement running on different levels. By suggesting that care acts in food provisioning, such as dishwashing and cooking, are 'care not-work', the study engages with the discussion about the relationship between recognition, acknowledgement and

care acts, critically contributing to the wider debate about invisible, routine care work. Furthermore, it is proposed that care acts in the course of farm production that depend on the management of time through tempos and rhythms involve a tinkering between creativity, embodied skills and routinised repetition. The care acts on farms, households and onsite in TP's branches are performed by and exchanged between care actors that are not just producers and consumers, but also non-human actors as well as the materialities and environments that are involved in performing the care acts. Such an approach permits access to the ethics and practice of care on farms, enabling their interpretation as a dense, wholesome process in which economical and affective care overlap indistinguishably. The focus on care acts as relational – in the weekly shifts and the kinship reproduction of producer and consumer households – depicts the extension of self-care to that for significant others, bigger social groups and surrounding environments within the spatiotemporalities of maintaining the TP.

The study is based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in 2015 and 2016 during which the different stages of organic food provisioning in Latvia were examined. The longer (up to one month) stays on two farms and with one consumer family provided thick ethnographic material on the role of care in the production and reproduction of food. Ethnographic primary data also includes substantial contextual material obtained at the meetings of the TP movement and the seminars organised within the educational and marketing campaign, BioLoģiski (2014-2016) – financed by the EU and the Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Latvia, and implemented by the Latvian Organic Farming Association. The movement's online presence in negotiations over changes in TP's organization and politics was observed by following common e-mail lists and social networks groups.

The thesis augments existing contributions in social and food research that explore small-scale alternative food provisioning practices against a backdrop of local and global changes. Research from the Global North provides well-explored claims that reconnection through care in alternative food provisioning implies a combination of nostalgia and constant adaptation to the present and future. This thesis builds on and revisits these implications by particularising the reconnection through care within the contextual specifics of Latvia as a country with a rather patchworked historical provenance.

Glossary

aprūpe – applied in almost all the same contexts as the English verb and noun forms of 'care' and used in everyday language: contexts of childcare, care for others in more general ways, health care.

babushka – 'granny'; one of the ways to refer to a maternal or paternal grandmother in the Russian-speaking community in Latvia; in this work *babushka* is also analysed as a trope that is loaded with symbolic significance connected to the meaning of grandmother in the Soviet Union.

bio, bioloģisks – 'organic'; used interchangeably with *eko*

eko – 'organic'; used interchangeably with *bio* and *bioloģisks*

gādāt – also *sagādāt*; lit. 'to provide' while semantically it is very similar to caring, to looking after something or someone.

kopt – lit. 'to care for something in the manner of tidying up or keeping it intact, to attend to'; can be applied to an extensive range of everyday activities, from the home and family to developing one's talents.

lauki – lit. 'fields'; normally used like the English noun 'countryside'.

lielais dānis – Bid Dane; a group of big-scale Danish farmers (usually hog farmers) who have bought up the land in Latvia for their agribusiness.

ome, oma – 'granny'; the German influence; one of the terms to designate the maternal or paternal mother in the family.

pulciņš – lit. 'a small crowd'. A commonly used term for all kinds of interest and hobby groups meeting on regular basis and acting for a certain purpose in Latvia.

rūpes – 'care'; involves both the definite possibility of taking care of someone or something and a negative potentiality of being worried and preoccupied about whether the process of caring will turn out well.

rūpēties – 'to care'; a verb; taking care of someone or something. It can also be used as an equivalent to the

process of doing or working on something that is of great importance.

saimniece – ‘mistress, hostess and carer for one’s own farm or household’ – semantically a combination of all three.

saimnieks – ‘master, host and carer for one’s own farm or household’ – semantically a combination of all three.

saimniekot – ‘to manage a farm or a household’; it can also describe taking charge of things and managing any kind of activity where work and taking care of materialities, people and non-humans are involved.

saimniecība – ‘farmstead, household’; often also used to describe the economy and economics on different scales.

tiešā pirkšana – ‘direct purchasing’; the name of the organic food movement addressed in this research.

viensēta – ‘a free-standing farmstead’; also, a symbolically loaded trope that is used in the popular discourse about ‘nation of peasants’ and ‘workers on their own land’ in Latvia.

vecmāmiņa – ‘granny’; one of the terms to designate the maternal or paternal mother in the family.

Key research participants

Kalniņi – producer family on whose farm I stayed in July 2015. Two parents: Ieva (mother, age 30) and Jurģis (father, age 30) and four children: Egils (son, age nine), Dina (daughter, age seven), Ints (son, age two), Elza (daughter, age two months). Main crops produced for the TP: microgreens (all year round), various seasonal greens, various root vegetables, pumpkins.

Ozoli – consumer family in whose home I conducted fieldwork in November 2015. Two parents: Jana (mother, age 35), Ansis (father, age 34) and three children: Anna (daughter, age ten), Luīze (daughter, age five), Augusts (son, age two); paternal grandmother Velta (age 70).

Saulīši – producer family on whose farm I stayed in June 2016. Two parents: Inese (mother, age 36), Pauls (father, age 36) and three children: Liene (daughter, age ten), Miķelis (son, age seven), Milda (daughter, age three). Main TP produce: honey. Their lamb flocks sustained the farm and enabled their participation in the TP: lamb, the meat being sold to a private clientele unrelated to the TP.

Zita and *Elza*– both aged 34. The 'mothers' of the movement who established TP in 2009.

Dace – age 41. An active TP participant in one of the branches in Riga; actively involved in the marketing activities of the educational campaign, BioLoģiski.

Laima – age 34. An active TP participant working at one of the branches of LAD (Lauku atbalsta dienests – Rural Support Service of the Republic of Latvia) at the time of my fieldwork.

Daina and Valts – producers aged 54 and 68. Main produce for the TP: dairy goods made from goat milk.

Kalnmeži – producer family. Three generations live and work on the farm, the oldest family member being a grandmother who was over 70. Main crop for the TP: strawberries and various preserved vegetables, fruits and berries.

Lejas – producer, age 70. Main produce for the TP: strawberries and various spices and herbs.

Inta – producer, age 66. Main produce for the TP: dairy, herbs and spices.

Mārtiņš – producer, age 30. Main produce for the TP: teas, spices, various greens, berries and fruits in small quantities.

Chapter 1

Introduction

While I was conducting the final interviews with farmers in August 2016, I became aware of an unsettling feeling. Almost at the end of fieldwork, I had not found an answer to a question concerning the motivations of the food provisioning movement of *tiešā pirkšana* (direct purchasing; from now on in the text addressed as TP, TP movement or movement). How is it that it continues to function and has not ceased to exist? I knew from my previous research and prevailing public discourse that it had been common, since Latvia regained independence, for similar kinds of food activism, initiated by grassroots activists or local communities, to come and go. The prevailing uncertainty and short-livedness have dogged both small and larger initiatives across the country for a few decades. Thus, I was curious about what has kept the movement working, growing and finally reproducing itself for almost ten years (as I write these lines at the beginning of 2019).

When I first arrived in the field in May 2015, the TP movement was at its strongest. In 2009 it started as small-scale collaboration system between one consumer family and several organic producers in northern Latvia (described later in this chapter). In 2015 it had become a fully functioning food provisioning system connecting farmers and producers across several regions in Latvia.

During my fieldwork (2015-2016) the movement comprised around 1,000 consumers and about 150 farming households. Over 20 local branches of the movement were situated in the capital and the biggest cities and towns in the northern, northeast and western regions of Latvia. The localities of the active centres of the movement corresponded with what were, historically, the most dynamic centres of the first organic farming communities, located around Liepāja, Cēsis and Sigulda (more on the history of organic farming in Latvia in Chapters Four and

Five). In line with its values, the movement functioned as a self-organising food distribution initiative. Every week consumers in local branches ordered food from the range that was provided by organic farmers. What was on offer was influenced by seasonality, weather conditions and each farmer's specific kind of crops. Orders were made through a common online platform elaborated especially for the movement and deliveries were made by farmers in-person to local branches (more on the interactions of the delivery stage in Chapter Nine).

The daily provisioning activities of the movement were carried out against a backdrop of more extensive educational organic and sustainable food activities at the country at the time, such as the BioLoģiski campaign that I describe in Chapter Five.

2015 and 2016 seemed like the perfect time to explore representations of such relatively impactful changes in food provisioning practices in Latvia. The changes looked like a 'here to stay' manifestation of growing understandings and enactments of self-organising food provisioning systems. TP also seemed to be the first relatively successful attempt to reconnect producers and consumers, country and city, despite previous negative experiences that had led to even more significant disconnection and very marginal collaboration schemes since the accession to the EU (Aistara 2018: 192-194; Šūmane 2011: 156-157). I write more about the reconnection between consumers and producers, and country and city in Chapters Four, Five and Nine.

In my writing-up phase, I realised that the concepts of reconnection, connection and disconnection are important analytical terms that can help me to untangle and interpret the *secret* behind the continuity of the movement. I chose to work with the interpretation of the term 'reconnection' detailed by Kneafsy et al. in the book, 'Reconnecting Consumers, Producers and Food' (2008). The authors analyse reconnection based on ethnographic material they collected on alternative food provisioning practices in the UK and Italy. Firstly, they critically approach reconnection in discourse that is affected by nostalgia, where it can be seen as a return to times when there were direct connections between producers and consumers and, therefore, the food exchanged in such close relationships.

In the light of this discourse, Kneafsy et al. point out that reconnection can be viewed in opposition to the disconnection perceived to be caused by the industrialisation of food production. Secondly, they see reconnection as not just a two-way, simplified relationship between producer and consumer. Reconnection in alternative food schemes usually involves the participation of whole families in food production and consumption, as well as the environment and non-human actors. This intricacy of reconnection also implies the possibly changing quality and availability of certain produce, while weather, growing conditions and other unpredictable circumstances affect the reconnection process itself. Thirdly, the authors see reconnection as a process and not a set and defined end state (2008: 31-32).

Keeping in mind the aspects of nostalgia, variability, complexity and processuality, research and public discourses of reconnection, as Kneafsy et al. (2008: 33) write, reference relationships between several parties: producers with the market (within the framework of governments, EU regulation schemes etc.); consumers with products, processes and place (in the form of niche retail lines among large retailers as well as alternative provisioning systems, such as TP); and, more generally, people with nature (exemplified by the BioLoģiski campaign in my own research – Chapter Five, and shared public discourses on land-work-nature which I write about in Chapters Four and Seven). I build on this detailed approach to the term of reconnection throughout this study, drawing on the complexity of the process in the work of the TP movement. This facilitates my contextualisation of the concept in the many-layered implications of changes in food provisioning practices in Latvia that have been affected by shifting political and ideological regimes.

To understand the complexity and often messiness of the reconnection process in Latvia, I focus on the element of care, which is also discussed by Kneafsy et al. who link the goal of reconnection to the importance of ethics and the practice of care in *alternative*

1 food provisioning (2008: 41-49). I side with their argumentation that care as a process and an activity has the

[1] I have chosen to apply the widely used term *alternative* for sake of analytical clarity in my work. However, I put it in the perspective of an ongoing discussion on the need to overcome the binary division between *conventional* and *alternative* food systems, which

potential to connect as well as reconnect. Care can create and mend affective, symbolic and functional ruptures in various relationships spatiotemporally. As I learned during research, care in its various manifestations was what connected and underlay the ideals and practices of the TP, from procuring the family meals to managing the movement itself.

Ideological care was also present in elucidating and retaining TP's values, which were embedded in broader discourses of care connected to the formation of national identity, relations with the state and global food provisioning systems (discussed in more detail in Chapters Four, Five and Seven). Furthermore, various manifestations of practical care were present in food production processes on the farms (see Chapter Eight), while invisible care work lay behind the least acknowledged of everyday food practices, such as dishwashing (see Chapter Six). Care as a thread of reconnection was woven through the multistage logistical processes described in Chapter Nine, and defined the generational and gendered connections, reconnections and disconnections at the households where the food was cooked and eaten (Chapter Ten).

The birth of the movement

Early in 2016, we met with Zita (one of the founders and later leaders of the movement) for one of our ongoing conversations in a cafe in Riga. This time I asked her to tell me explicitly how the movement started. What were its beginnings?

'It was October… I wanted all [food] to be organic, so I called my husband and told him this', Zita begins. It was soon after the birth of their daughter. Both parents decided, OK, we could try to eat only organic food for a month. Zita was supposed to find the way to do so while her husband agreed to pay for the experiment. She went through the farmers' ads on a public online announcements page and called her first producer, Laine, ordering a sack of carrots,

often overlooks the complexity of contextuality of different food provisioning systems (Lammer 2017; Grasseni, Jung et.al. 2014; Kneafsy et al. 2008).

which was delivered to their home. They were drinking lots of carrot juice back then. The whole family was interested in ayurvedic eating practices. Zita remembers that one day she realised that her kitchen table was completely covered with substantially diverse organic produce. Zita got to know more and more organic farmers although the relationship with Laine soon came to an end as Zita discovered that her farming and particularly her selling strategies were not ethical at all; she had been reselling her neighbours' produce and often it was not even clear whether it was organic at all. Eventually, as the range and quantity of products started to increase and more and more farmers became interested in this practice of direct sales, Zita invited her friends to join her in a joint purchase order. One of her best friends, Elza, became something like an engine to the growing movement. Meanwhile, Zita calls herself Brežņevs (after former Soviet leader, Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev) who, she laughs, was infamous for his passive role as a politician who seemingly could only appear and wave to the nation. Thus, Zita considers herself to be the ideological 'mother' of the movement while Elza is the 'doer'.

They decided that there was going to be a movement even before the first *pulciņš*[2] was formed. A small group of people began meeting in an organic shop in one of the districts of Riga which Zita found when searching for organic food outlets close to the family home. The owner of the shop encouraged Zita to contact one of the long-term environmental activists in Latvia and after a joint meeting with 'Zemes draugi' (a local branch of the international organisation Friends of the Earth), which had already been involved in various activities, they decided to start a movement against the GMO. Through 'Zemes draugi' Zita got to know Maija who was in a relationship with a French man at the time who was an activist in an alternative provisioning system in France. French activists visited the Latvian countryside and, in return, the initial activists of the movement, including Zita, went to France and familiarised themselves with its provisioning system. That was an important motivation. Zita sees this whole formative phase of the movement as somehow destiny. Ideas about similar schemes had already been in the air for a few years, yet

[2] Pulciņš – lit. a small crowd. A commonly used term for all kinds of interest and hobby groups meeting on regular basis and acting for a certain purpose in Latvia.

conditions had never been right. This time the pieces started falling into place.

Eventually, they parted ways with the owner of the organic shop where the first pulciņš was situated. The owner was more interested in business and profit, which was not the purpose of the movement; the only people supposed to profit from the enterprise were the farmers. The shop owner even began to suspect that Zita and Elza were putting on an act and that their actual goal was to create some murky business scheme. This is not an uncommon kind of suspicion among members of the first post-Soviet generation.

Yet Zita, Elza and other activists who became increasingly involved with the idea and practice of organic food production believed in the principle of voluntary work and dedication. Gradually the first real pulciņš was established in the central part of Riga. This time, a café was chosen whose owner Zita had met through the kindergarten their children attended. Later, choosing cafes, shops or other publicly accessible spaces with a fridge and some storage space became a pattern characterising the localisations of separate branches. As the first branch grew bigger, it split, and another one was established on the opposite bank of the River Daugava. The motivations of each new leader (or, as they are called, unofficial leaders) of separate branches were different. Some saw it as a revolutionary opportunity to protest against GMO or supermarkets; some were warier and looked at their branch as a social experiment. Nevertheless, the movement kept spreading.

In one of my first meetings with Zita in May 2015 in yet another coffee shop in Riga, she spoke about the purpose and motivations behind TP, telling me that she thought there were several components to its founding idea and practical enactments. Like the organisers of the BioLoģiski campaign, Zita was also convinced that people in Latvia still need to be educated, even about widely appropriated terms that are mainstream in the other parts of the world, like a fair trade, food sovereignty and GMO. Furthermore, she enjoyed sharing the knowledge she has accumulated throughout the years of working in different environmental NGOs and projects. In her opinion, one of the starting points and thresholds for these education and awareness-raising initiatives was a solid knowledge and understanding

of the importance of the organic certification scheme. According to her, from there it was also possible to start comprehending other alternative provisioning practices and schemes such as permaculture and biodynamics.

As TP has picked up the pace, Zita, as one of the leaders of the movement, has encountered many adverse reactions, mainly from small home producers (see also Chapter Seven). In Zita's experience, an angry response was normal when small home producers were asked for proof of their organic certification, one which stems from the producers' perceptions that their working methods and produce are certainly natural and of the best quality. This anger feeds into the well-researched narrative mentioned above to the effect that farmers in post-socialist spaces consider all their produce to be natural as they still live in the fog of communist resistance discourse. Just by virtue of the fact that farmers were able to regain their family farms and re-start farming was, in their eyes, a guarantee that their work went according to nature and, therefore, the produce they offer is 'natural' (Caldwell 2011; Gabriel 2005).

On the other hand, such reactions can be triggered and supported, first, by the hardships that are encountered by small home producers due to the accession to the EU and the embedded structural injustice that accompanies it: that is, EU norms and regulations complement the practices of the more prominent producers yet are hardly applicable to the scale of small producers. Second, the perspective of farmers' perceptions and interpretation is often overlooked by consumers and in the public discourse. Thus, it was rarely acknowledged that farmers' perceptions are deeply intertwined with notions of what is natural and carefully grown, packed and offered to the buyer (see more on both aspects in Chapters Eight and Nine).

During our conversations, Zita admitted that in many ways the whole movement is to some degree an experiment in that it is very open-ended and leaves lots of room for experimenting with market strategies that would be beneficial for both farmers and consumers. Farmers were sceptical at the beginning about whether the initiative would work (see also the conversation with Dace reported above). Would they be able to sell their produce? This was one of the main obstacles on the farmers' side that needed to be overcome for a reconnection to be made. Another was

the deep-rooted perception among the consumers that organic food is much more expensive. The movement intended to find common ground where these obstacles could be overcome by building shared food provisioning strategies. One of the main communication tools between consumers and producers needed to be the produce itself. It should be both message and a messenger. As such, it was supposed to embody principles of organic farming, offer freedom of choice and close the distance between the producer and consumer. These principles resemble the three primary values according to which the movement was run: organic produce, volunteerism and friendship.

These values, or rather motivations and ideals, were the leading guidelines for all the pulciņi or branches (I further investigate the conceptualisation and application of these central values in Chapter Seven), yet Zita noted that it would be great if all movement participants shared common understandings of how they should be interpreted. This was not the case, however, and the differences had caused some participants to leave. Nonetheless, Zita noted that the branches were encouraged to find their balance in interpreting and applying the values in practice, which is why they needed to operate without visible or domineering leadership; those branches whose leaders were too controlling did not work so well, according to Zita. She was at her happiest when she learned that a sense of community was developing across the separate branches. People were becoming friends or starting joint projects as they shared the same interests and values. Sometimes trips to the producers were organised for consumers to take part in collective farming activities to learn about organic production on the ground.

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Elza, the other founder and leader of the movement, was good friends with Zita; thus, to her, joining the movement was an 'organic' action, along with the values it held high. Her subjective motivations resembled Zita's: to take care of nature and the environment that surrounds us and of which we are all part. Another big motivation for her was, she says, 'to feed our [hers and Zita's] new-born daughters'. Elza is

convinced that the movement's leaning towards more abstract values – towards caring about and for nature and doing it as a group that shares these goals – was the purpose of establishing it in the first place. Participants wanted to enter the next stage. An individual relationship between the lone and isolated consumer and a single producer, one economically rooted in exchange schemes, was not efficient if they wanted to keep the values alive; they also needed to surround the exchange with appealing and relevant ideology. Nevertheless, Elza kept stressing that beyond these shared understandings of the highest purpose of the movement, she had her own personal, profound and embodied perceptions of her emplacement in, and relationships with, nature. Importantly, Elza has the impression that, throughout the years of collaboration, farmers have started trusting the scheme that TP provides. She thinks that farmers have developed a feeling of purpose, a sense of the necessity of their work and values.

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For Dace (the organiser of the BioLoģiski campaign), the primary first connection and impulse to join the movement also came from her acquaintance with Zita. Having been a part of different green initiatives at the level of NGOs and official state policy for many years, Dace was involved in the 'birth of the movement' through her job duties at that time. She also accompanied the group of French activists and played an important role in accumulating knowledge about similar activities elsewhere and crafting the main principles of TP. Even though she was involved in the formative part, Dace did not become an active participant in the movement at that stage as she was already involved in one of the rare organic shop initiatives, 'Dabas dobe', which preceded TP. The operating principle of the shop resembled that of TP: people could choose their products online, then the purchase was assembled by the shop workers and in most cases delivered to the consumer's house. A similar but much comprehensive scheme, 'Svaigi.lv' is now working in Latvia. Due to its niche characteristics and the unreadiness of the broader market for organic produce, 'Dabas dobe' was what could be called an elitist project. Prices were relatively high,

and the range of produce was selective and sometimes not diverse enough. Later, as Dace distanced herself from 'Dabas dobe', she joined a branch of TP close to her home in one of the districts of Riga. This was organised through a friend as most of the pulciņi were fully subscribed at that time as the movement was spreading and growing fast. Soon TP became the primary source of food provision in Dace's household.

Movement of women?

The majority of participants in TP are women, who comprise around 90% of all participants (based on registered names on the online platform of the movement). On average, they are 25-45 years old, educated and knowledgeable, married with one to three children, with an average or below-average income. There is also a high concentration of women among participating farmers and it can be assumed that the movement is managed and maintained mostly by women.

Guntra Aistara points out that the high concentration of women in the alternative and mainly organic food provisioning sector, including the work of various NGOs and both significant and smaller movements, must be seen as a historical consequence of post-Soviet realities in the rural areas of Latvia. Often in the harsh transition circumstances, in which one crisis of state-building followed another, the women took up the role of steering 'the ship' of survival in communities of every size, especially in the countryside, while men often collapsed under the pressure and turned to alcohol (2018: 27). Grasseni casts further light on this gender imbalance in alternative food provisioning when pointing out that in Italy, in GAS (Gruppo de Acquisto Solidale or solidarity purchase groups), women are the main activists due to their 'traditionally' prescribed role in the community as those taking care of feeding the family. Grasseni also suggests that a 'natural' and embedded capacity of women to craft all kinds of creative and on-the-spot solidarities in the domestic environment empowers them to do the same in more public food provisioning practices such as GAS (ibid.: 72-75). Grasseni notes that the participants of GAS did not particularly address the embedded and structural gender

inequalities that can be viewed as the 'dark side' of the designation of 'natural' to women's roles and skills in food provisioning, making it clear that GAS members did not see and address gender inequality issues as a part of their work towards justice and solidarity (ibid.: 72-73). Throughout my fieldwork, I have experienced a somewhat similar standpoint, especially among consumers, with whom I discussed possible inequalities. Either they did not perceive inequalities, or they did not think they were an issue that somehow needs to be connected to the primary motivations and values of the movement.

Nevertheless, the women in TP were active and visible at every stage of the everyday care ethics of food provisioning. At one end of these activities lies washing-up and cleaning the kitchen on an everyday basis; at the other end were the weekly shifts that are performed in a voluntary yet strictly organised manner. It is also here that the movement becomes visible through the active work of its women founders and, as they call them, 'unofficial leaders', who make appearances in media, educational seminars and other grassroots as well as state-level activities. They popularise the ideas and work of the movement and expand its membership at the same time. Thus, it could be said that in both the private and public spheres, the movement has a woman's face.

With a similar intention as existing critical research on alternative food systems, I want to show that TP should not be viewed and analysed as 'a middle-class foodie circle' (Grasseni 2013: 12), nor as to the mere self-expression of housewives that want to become more visible in the public sphere. Instead, I highlight the practice of TP as 'innovative, collective and transformative' – to apply Grasseni's evaluation of GAS groups in Italy (ibid.).

I consider the gender of the TP movement in detail in Chapter Six through addressing the gendered aspects of routine care work and their importance and standing in the broader entanglement of care in TP. In Chapter Ten, I discuss the implications of gender in the division of care for the family through feeding.

Chapter 2

Research questions and main theoretical discussions

It became clear soon that ultimately the ethnographic material would affect my research questions, which were adjusted during fieldwork. The final research questions were formed after fieldwork came to an end and I revisited and started analysing the data. I ended up asking:

- What is the care and how does it become manifested in the TP movement?
- Who cares and is cared for/about in the TP movement?
- What are the various care acts in the TP movement?
- Why care and how to do care - what are the ethical implications of care in the TP movement?
- What are the spatiotemporalities of care in the TP movement?

In the answer to the first research question I build on previous scholarship on the ethics and practice of care (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Thelen 2015; Mol et al. 2010; Tronto 1993), I try to establish a balance between analytical and empirical representations of care by exploring the semantics and epistemology of care in the Latvian language and culture. I then apply these empirical perceptions and interpretations, terms and concepts, to the different manifestations of care in my ethnographic material, meanwhile contextualising them in a broader discussion about the care that has been identified in previous research.

The second research question of my dissertation focuses on those taking part in the care acts. Instead of making a clear division between care givers and receivers, I allude to the relational and reciprocal *mutuality of being* that is ongoing between the human and non-human actors involved in everyday food care processes. Marshal Sahlins (2011) introduced the notion of the mutuality of being to a wider

discussion on what is and what is not kinship in anthropology by describing it as a concept that helps to explain what kinship *is*. His short definition of the term implies that mutuality of being refers to 'persons who are members of one another, who participate intrinsically in each other's existence' (2011: 2). This is a fairly inclusive definition that leaves considerable room for interpretation and I take advantage of that by adding non-human and environmental participants, and the materialities that are intrinsic to identifying and understanding the various aspects of care in my work.

Thirdly, I examine care acts and how they are enacted within the different entanglements of care in the TP movement, opening the discussion in this introductory chapter and continuing it more meticulously in Chapter Six, although it is a theme that runs throughout the whole dissertation. To ground the discussion, I establish the relationships between the concepts applied by different authors in the social sciences when addressing *acts, work/labour and care* (Graeber 2018; Wajcman 2015; Meah 2014; DeVault 1991). Drawing on the ethnographic material, I pay special attention to different aspects of care concerning *foodwork*, which, according to Angela Meah (2014), is a 'complex of practices' that encompasses food planning, provisioning, preparation and cleaning-up activities. More importantly, Meah stresses the aspect of 'taken for granted' that is attributed to such work, as in the Global North it has been associated with domestic reproductive labour that often has an oppressive dimension (2014: 672). Although my analysis shows that foodwork by TP participants was often invisible and taken for granted, I also discuss (see Chapters Six and Ten) the extent to which such work was perceived and experienced as an obligation and as something oppressive. In Chapter Six I ask does seeing and interpreting such work as a care work or *care not-work* offer an additional perspective to the most prevalent feminist discourses?

In the fourth research question, I address the ethics of care by asking, why care? I focus on the ethical and moral aspects of care acts when examining motivations and values and how they are perceived and performed by different actors of the TP movement. Does *caring about* specific values result in *caring for* (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 5)? In her book, 'Moral Boundaries' (1993), Tronto distinguishes

four main ethical implications of care processes: caring about, taking care of, caregiving and care receiving. *Caring about* is seen as society's ability to notice and recognise that something or someone needs to be taken care of. Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) and Muehlebach (2012) classify *caring for* as a practical manifestation of care, while according to Tronto's classification it consists of two other stages in the caring process: caregiving and care receiving. In my work, I side with the shortened version provided by Muehlebach and Puig de la Bellacasa and address *caring about* as the moral and ethical side of care and *caring for* as its practical manifestation. I agree with Tronto and Puig de la Bellacasa (2017: 4) that the distinction is useful for analytical purposes through the moral and practical aspects of care are closely intertwined in my ethnographic material.

Finally, to localise and contextualise the actors, acts and value systems of care in my research questions, I address the notions of time and space/place and relations between them. What are the importance and characteristics of different temporal aspects of care acts in the movement, such as rhythms and tempo vs. linearity? Is it more useful to talk about certain *spatiotemporalities* instead of separating time and space/place to understand the complexity of entanglements of care in TP? I also ask whether care facilitates reconnection in space and time by forming and reforming entanglements of care.

The directionality of research questions helped me to localise the theoretical discussions that became relevant in analysing the collected ethnographic material. In the successive subsections that follow the order of research questions, I introduce the overarching theoretical discussions and application of concepts that are proposed and/or elaborated in this work.

What care?

You need to care about or for something enough to invest time, energy and affection in making it happen, keeping it going or getting it done. A lack of care can be perceived as 'indifference and neglect' (Reid 2018: 144) and an indifferent, 'I don't care' attitude as a form of revolt (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 5).

Despite the commonly reproduced discourse on care as the ultimate manifestation of unconditional love, warm nurture and sacrifice (cf. critical research in feminist scholarship on care as a burden and unvalued obligation), caring about or for something is not necessarily a joyful and pleasant act or experience. Indeed, it is likely that a proper care act will involve plenty of unanticipated effort, the input of extra energy, some hesitation and maybe even disgust stemming from feelings of obligation and responsibility. In essence, such care can be seen as somewhat similar to what David Graeber has described as work itself: activities that we perform because they need to be done, to obtain or take part in something else (2018: 156).

Care in everyday encounters is a rather odd mix of emotional and practical manifestations between humans, non-humans, surrounding environments and materialities. Seen that way, care is neither bad nor good in itself (Mol et al. 2010: 12-13; Mol 2008: 84), nor would it be right to assume that care only equals love and affection (Reid 2018: 154), although it is an element of constant reproductive acts of some kind (reproduction of kin, persons, lifeworlds). It is present wherever someone cares about/for somebody or something and where the processes of life[3] are *continued, maintained and repaired*,[4] while Puig de la Bellacasa suggests seeing care as wholesome affection, moral obligation, work, a burden, a joy, a learned practice and something that we merely do (2017: 1).

Care has been largely overlooked in the development of Western thought, lingering on the margins of the bigger philosophical, moral and ethical debates if present at all. A rare exception to this is the work of phenomenologist Heidegger who spoke about care as *being-in-the-world* and *being-together-with-things*. To Heidegger, the concept of care was primarily a 'primordial structural totality' and 'an existential *a priori*'. He also saw it as a phenomenon that prioritises the 'practical' (quotation marks in original) rather than theoretical behaviour. Heidegger argued that

[3] In his recent book, *Bullshit Jobs* (2018), David Graber notes that it is likely many of us would compare caring work to life itself and thus fall into the trap of undervaluing the importance of such labour (168).

[4] According to the definition of care coined by Joan Tronto and Berenice Fisher these three acts are essential in viewing and experiencing care as an active form of living in and sustaining the world (1991: 40).

such concepts as *wish*, *willing urge* and *predilection* are inseparable from Dasein and are 'based upon' care. Furthermore, by speaking of care as something that characterises being human, Heidegger stresses the significance of the inseparability of two, as being-in-the-world for a human equals care (1996 [1953]: 180-185). This interpretation explains the phenomenological perception and understanding of care as an ultimate form of human existence in the world rather on an abstract philosophical level. Nevertheless, it still does not offer much to the discussion of ethics of care present in everyday experiences that are lived, felt and reflected upon.

More substantial research interest in care ethics and, equally important, their practice, has begun with the ongoing work of feminist scholars and the development of what Tronto calls a 'women's morality' in the philosophy of ethics and morality discussions (Jarosz 2011: 318; Tronto 1993: 3-4). Feminist scholars have been pointing out that aspects of care and caring have been 'cornered' and neglected, as they have been associated with the unequal division of power; since the instigation of 'capitalist world order' discourses (calling on the vast body of notions in Marxist-inspired research), care has been approached as something that is the burden of the less privileged, mainly women, people of colour and the poor (Patel and Moor 2017; Thelen 2015; DeVault 1991).

Since the initial influential works by feminist writers (e.g., Tronto 1993; Gilligan 1982), research on care as a moral category and practice has gone through several periods. According to Tatjana Thelen, these started with the 1960s and 1970s when the implications of care in public and private spheres became a topic of inquiry in the light of Marxist and feminist studies on social reproduction (Thelen 2015: 501). In '90s studies, the weight of those individualised care and choices (mainly of the less privileged) with the ultimate purpose of social reproduction, moved to the realm of communal responsibility. This neoliberal approach and the authors that addressed it found it challenging to find the balance between the marketisation of care (previously kin-provided care services becoming state or service companies' business) and 'maintaining' the right amount of affection and emotion in caring acts (ibid.: 503). Such a seemingly 'unsolvable' ambivalence in caring practices might have led

to the most recent developments, in which care research is witnessing the results of the view that 'real', 'good' and 'loving' care can be found in the private domain of kinship and its 'return' to the domestic sphere. (ibid.: 503-504, 510).

The notion of care in anthropological research has also been widely applied and examined within kinship studies. Not surprisingly, care in kinship studies has always been addressed within the realm of food practices wherein growing, cooking and serving food has been linked with different forms of caring: for family, for personhood, and relationships within and outside one's social group (Sutton 2001; Carsten 1995).

Summing up, Puig de la Bellacasa (2017: 2) writes that studies of the last three decades show that inquiries into care through the prism of ethics of care are just a small part of what has been done in approaching the various representations of care and caring in spheres such as nursing and the social aspects of medical care, ethics and philosophy, and political studies – although it is also the case that the perpetrators of these inquiries are not always aware of each other's labours. She also stresses that the broadened approach to care in research has led to overcoming the gendered division of ethics and practice of care and the well-known equation that women equal care work. I build on these observations in my study when addressing the gendered dynamics and relationality of care within the TP movement in Chapters Six and Ten.

Care in the TP movement

Among TP participants, care and caring primarily materialised as a form of hard work and resilience. The diverse acts of care were pre-determined activities that were supposed to provide one or another kind of results. Simultaneously, care was also represented in the ideas and values that inspired and gave the necessary moral and ideological grounds for proceeding with these activities. Caring about or for something in TP meant that those involved in the reciprocity of care believed that they were bettering their own lives as well as making the world they inhabit a somewhat better place, as this is the care work that

is imbued with high social value (Graeber 2018: 139). However, care and caring were far from something homogenous and easy to define and my research also taught me that they are hard to conceptualise and categorise. Care very often goes unaccounted, misperceived and misused (as a moral and analytical abstraction); moreover, most importantly, care is always entangled in its wordly messiness (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 10). I side with Puig de la Bellacasa's approach to 'reclaiming' care, which proposes to be alert and open to its situated and embedded realities (2017: 11). It is also essential to not give in to 'conventional' perceptions and understandings of care, rather noticing the nuances in the discourse of care 'so that both the ambivalence of our desires and the messiness of our attempts to care can come into view' (Stevenson 2014: 3).

Care in Latvian translates as *rūpes* and is a word that has an uncertain meaning. Rūpes and the verb *rūpēties* always involve both the definite possibility of taking care of someone or something and a negative potentiality of being worried and preoccupied about whether the process of caring will turn out well. Rūpēties can be used as an equivalent to the process of doing or working on something that is of great importance. The verb rūpēties (to care) as well as the modification of the noun rūpes→*aprūpe* (care) are less loaded with the element of a worry than noun rūpes. Rūpēties and aprūpe are applied almost in all the same contexts as the English verb and noun forms of care and used in everyday language: contexts of childcare, care about others in more general ways, health care. Even though I do not use linguistic analysis in my work, the semantic ambivalence of rūpes and rūpēties is essential in the process of deciphering entanglements of care food-work in the TP movement as it also determined whether it would be used by the participants in my research.

Both noun and verb were most commonly applied in general conversations among its most active participants about the values and motivations of the movement. Thus rūpes and rūpēties occasionally appeared in email conversations as well as at gatherings in which different concerns about how the movement should operate were expressed. On the everyday level of practices that concern stages of food production, distribution and consumption,

another set of other verbs that describe the diversity of caring acts was used instead of rūpes and rūpēties.

In the context of food provisioning and consumption – collecting food from the distribution points and later preparing it for the family – a common verb that was used was *gādāt* and its variation *sagādāt*. Literally, it means 'to provide' while semantically it is very similar to caring, to looking after something or someone.[5]

Another widely used verb is *kopt* (lit. to care for something in the manner of tidying up or keeping it intact, to attend to),[6] which can be applied to an extensive range of everyday activities, from the home and family to developing one's talents.[7] Inside the households, kopt and *sakopt* were mainly used concerning food production, washing-up and cleaning and tidying between meals; they were also often used when talking about taking care of the land, the soil and the plants and animals of the farmstead. In public discourse imbued with manifestations of agrarian nationalism that was appropriated by TP members (mostly unconsciously and in a somewhat a self-unaware manner) kopt was used when talking of taking good care of the fatherland. I address the theme of the relationship between care and work, land and nation in Chapter Four.

Who cares and is cared for?

In 1991 Berenice Fisher and Joan Tronto devised a definition for 'care' that remains the most cited and interpreted approach to the concept today.

On the most general level, we suggest that caring be viewed *a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible*. The world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to

[5] https://www.letonika.lv/groups/default.aspx?q=g%C4%81d%C4%81t&s=0&g=2&r=10621033 last visited 17.01.2019

[6] https://www.letonika.lv/groups/default.aspx?q=kopt&s=0&g=2&r=10621033 last visited 17.01.2019

[7] http://www.tezaurs.lv/#/sv/kopt and https://lv.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/KOPT last visited 17.01.2019

interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web. (emphasis in the original; Tronto 1993: 103)

Almost two decades later, Kneafsy et al. (2008: 45) applied the definition to the analysis of alternative food networks and systems, pointing out that food might be one of the best embodiments and enactors of the Fisher and Tronto's definition, as it maintains and sustains our 'bodies, selves and environments'.

If activities and processes reflecting this definition are among the primary qualities characterising care, then 'reaching out to something other than self' (Tronto 1993: 102) and a constant state of interdependency (Gilligan 1982: 74) are further traits that are crucial in the work of food provisioning systems. In fact, in food practices, both action and reaching out for others – human and non-human – can be seen as closely interrelated (Jarosz 2011: 318) and are even more critical when approaching alternative forms of food provisioning. In such practices, important decisions that lead to action are crafted in close relationships between the different actors involved (Kneafsy et al. 2008: 41). Thus care in food practices can be understood as something that everyone is, and can be, involved in, and that everyone needs (ibid.: 43); not least, animals and plants need to be cared for to become produce (see, e.g., Harbers in Mol et al. 2010). The work within alternative provisioning systems must be organised with care to respect the needs of others and encourage common values. Later in the process, care is present when food is brought home and turned into a meal for household members.

Several mutualities of being, or rather mutualities of care, between different actors emerged as paramount in understanding the entanglements of care within the TP movement. One such mutuality was between producers and consumers. My research aim was always to focus equally on both, as I wanted to obtain the fullest possible picture of a small-scale food provisioning system; consequently, I give equal weight to describing the caring perspectives from both viewpoints. In Chapters Seven and Nine, I discuss the kind of mutualities of being through care that are created by these two actor groups, and the ways they understand, interpret and apply the value(s) systems that shape their moral attitudes and choices.

The second mutuality that I address throughout the dissertation is caring in the course of production, wherein the human and non-human actors (plants, animals, soil, diverse farm materialities) are equal and continually reciprocal to produce and reproduce the soil, the products that are sold to the consumers of the movement, the families on the farms and finally farms as caring production systems – which could also be seen as one of the main spatiotemporalities of care in my research.

Thirdly, in Chapter Nine I turn to the mutualities that could be characterised as care that is institutional and 'formal', part of broader state policies (Thelen 2015; Popke 2006; Smith 2005; Sevenhuijsen 2003). Such care can often be 'cold' (Mol et al. 2010; Hochschild 1995), mechanical and even border on something that can be called not-care (Lammer 2017; Stevenson 2014). Following the discussions of how institutional care should be approached and analysed by social scientists, in Chapters Seven and Nine I examine mutualities of care between producers and the organic certification institutions that represent the joint care of both the state and the EU. I also look at the broader political and social contexts, such as care about the nation from the perspective of state and policymakers, in which the TP movement was operating and contributing with their perspectives and acts of care. I then analyse how general care by the state for the overall wellbeing of its citizens – materialised in the form of infrastructure, mainly roads – affects and juxtaposes entanglements of care in food production and, more importantly, the logistics of distribution.

The final mutuality of care I address in my research is kinship. As I mentioned above, the relationship between care, kinship and food have been widely researched in anthropology. Historically, and mainly within the realm of economic anthropology and kinship studies (Thelen 2015), the unity of care, kinship and food has become a critical ethnographic research avenue in the understanding of the social organisation, the formation of personhood and finally social relations ongoing among kin and outside kin groups (Sutton 2001, Carsten 1995, Weismantel 1995). Bracketed with kinship, I address two recurring strands of mutualities of care: gender and generation. Thus, in Chapter Six, I analyse representations of routine care by contextualising it in the comprehensive, gendered

care/work discussion sustained by mainly feminist scholars. In Chapter Ten, I explore a specific example of connection, disconnection and reconnection through care in food practices by positioning grannies and children in the processes of maintaining, repairing and continuing the spatiotemporal perceptions and experiences of families, the TP movement, history and the nation.

How to do care?

Care acts are deeply subjective as they require the performance of accumulated and mastered embodied skills by caring individuals. They are also social because caring is a relational activity, as I have discussed above. To understand this ambivalent capacity of care acts better, throughout my work I endeavour to establish my analytical middle ground between general theoretical discussions in anthropology and the social sciences that are concerned with the subjectivities of experiences and acting (mainly in phenomenological scholarship), and discussions that address the processes of creating and sustaining social relationships and social organisation.

Doing, performing and carrying out the acts with care was what made them meaningful for the participants of TP. The presence of care in these acts also ensured that they were ongoing and continuous. However, as I also mentioned and will continue pointing out in this work, these acts were almost always somewhat marginal, somewhere in-between, invisible, unrecognised and unacknowledged, even by the actors themselves. I tackle these aspects of invisibility and recognition by drawing on ethnographic material that demonstrates that acting with care in the TP always implies the requirement of work, which, in this context, means acts that are repetitive and rhythmical (and can quickly become routinised, as I write in Chapter Six). They can also be seen as work because they have the aim of producing or reproducing some kind of value(s). I do not, however, engage in the discussion of what has historically been considered work – a task recently accomplished by, for instance, David Graeber (2018) and Andrea Komlosy (2018), who both draw on the transformation of the concept in the Western discourses while pointing out its vast linguistic and semantic capacity (Komlosy 2018: 7).

Care as a working activity or in terms of various forms of care work has been discussed in anthropology and the social sciences quite extensively (Drotbohm and Erdmute 2015: 2-3); as a profession and paid work in medical anthropology (Brown 2012; Gottfried 2013); in the service industry, including cleaning work, wellness and beauty (Kang 2010; Hochschild 1983); and in research on migration and care work (Lutz 2016; Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck 2012; Hochschild 2002). As I mention elsewhere in this dissertation (particularly in Chapter Six), an extensive part of this broader care work discussion has been developed in the feminist scholarship in which one of the main recurring issues has been the division between the paid and unpaid care work attributed to two distinctive spatiotemporalities: public and domestic (Thelen 2015). Nevertheless, as Drotbohm and Erdmute point out, care work often reaches beyond these abstract categories that have contributed to its invisibility and lack of recognition (2015: 4).

My intention is not to enter the discussion on the need to valorise care work, nor the possible positionality or belonging of such care work to abstract categories like public or domestic. Instead, I follow the thread of care acts and show how they were enacted as work that, as Graeber says, just needs to be done (2018: 136), that are paramount in securing different aspects of sustaining the lifeworlds of the TP movement. That said, I am interested in care acts that for one or another reason could be seen as work and that contribute to the everyday production and reproduction of the TP movement on its different levels. These include: care work in the production of food on farms and the simultaneous reproduction of farms themselves; care work in the various stages of foodwork in the households of participants; care work in the complex logistics of produce distribution; and the care work of upholding the standards of TP's operations through its members' adherence to the values and motivations of the movement.

This perspective of care as work that needs to be done corresponds to what Heidegger described as being-in-the-world and being-together-with-things, meanwhile alluding to the other aspect of care acts in the movement that turned out to be significant: the actors' own experiences throughout these acts and the bodily skills that were needed to perform them to secure the principle of sustaining,

continuing and maintaining (see definition by Tronto and Fischer above) the world in which the movement was operating. In Chapter Eight, I contribute to the discussion on the importance of creativity and experimentation that goes hand in hand with mastering one's skills in caring acts (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Singleton and Law 2013; Harbers 2010) by describing the multilayered spatiotemporalities of care on the farms. Discussion of the importance of embodied skills in care acts continues in Chapter Nine when I address the processes of harvesting and packaging the produce that was exchanged in the TP movement.

The embodied care acts and their embeddedness in the materialities where they were carried out were important not only on the farms but also in the kitchens where the everyday foodwork in its different stages was performed (Meah 2016, 2014; Douglas 1991; Chapter Six). Finally, the embodiment of care acts was evident in their disciplining through adherence to self-regulatory norms thereby translating self-care into care for the community (Jarosz 2011; Foucault on self-care in Fornet-Betancourt et al. 1988). Such disciplining care was exemplified in the weekly work shifts performed by TP consumers (see Chapter Nine).

Spatiotemporalities of care

The care that I observed and experienced in the TP movement was manifested within and through *spatiotemporalities of care*, which I define as a dynamic spatiotemporal relationality between caring and cared for human and non-human actors, as well as inclusive and exclusive environments and materialities – dynamic because I show that, among my field participants, spatiotemporalities were not a thing or entity but rather a process, for instance, the process of reconnection.

The term spatiotemporalities, adopted from Nancy Munn's take on 'spacetime' in Gawa (1986; discussed further below), implies that care in the TP movement was manifested and perceived through time and space intermittently and mutually. Finally, the spatiotemporalities of care can be seen as both abstract and lived processes as they encompass ideas and perceptions as

well as the lived and experienced realities of the participants of the movement.

My departure point for the understanding and interpretation of spatiotemporalities of care is again an attempt to establish a middle ground between phenomenological and social structure/social organisation approaches. Therefore, I start with a reference to Ingold's (2011) phenomenologically grounded discussion of the work of geographer Doreen Massey. The main argument he uses to criticise Massey's work is that scholars researching human worlds should abandon the concept of 'space' because it has been used as an abstract and two-dimensional category in philosophical thought that is hard to fill it with life and living (2011: 164). Ingold continues by suggesting that, instead, the concept of *place* should be revisited. Referring to a relatively recent discussion in philosophy about the relationship between space and place (e.g., Edward Casey1996, 1998), Ingold proposes seeing the place, not as an established and spatially embedded 'container' of life but rather as a process, like *knots* or entanglements of living that are always on the move (2011: 167-167).

I build on Ingold's ideas about living as movement and process by adding the dimension of time or temporality, which I regard as paramount for a better understanding of life in this light. I apply this more general definition of living in and with the world to care and caring, which, according to Heidegger, could be the same thing (1996 [1953]:193), while Ingold's formulation of places as knotted subjective and social experiences – for instance in homes inhabited by families (2012: 168) – is vital to developing the understanding of spatiotemporalities of care in my work. This is not only a phenomenologically determined necessity; throughout the study, and specifically in Chapters Six, Eight and Nine I demonstrate the importance of time in strengthening experienced and lived care and also its power to secure specific manifestations of social organisation and social relationships (in households, in the local branches of TP, between consumers and producers) among my research participants, environments and materialities.

Nancy Munn defines spacetime as a 'multidimensional, symbolic order and process' (1986: 10). She continues:

[S]patiotemporal features of this process consist of relations, such as those of distance, location (including geographical domains of space), and directionality; duration and continuance, succession, timing (including temporal coordination and relative speed of activities), and so forth. (Ibid.)

Munn's take on spacetime, like Ingold's notion of knots, is instrumental as a core reference to understanding what I see as the spatiotemporalities of care in my work.

Yet, as mentioned above, spatiotemporalities of care in the TP movement are both abstract and very emplaced and embodied simultaneously. This combination of abstract and experienced is represented best in one the most recurring manifestations of the spatiotemporalities as a process that I address in my dissertation: connection and its different implications of reconnection and disconnection (see Chapters Five, Nine and Ten). Throughout the ethnographic description, I show that the connection processes that were present on the different levels of the movement were not linear and forward-moving activities. Firstly, those expressed in the everyday ethics of care and care acts themselves took place against a backdrop of imagined and redefined historical spatiotemporalities (Verdery 1999: 115). The various political and ideological regimes that had been experienced in Latvia since the republic was first established a century ago were represented in the prevalent discourses about the country's history, identity and values that were also present in the ideological and ethical constitution of the TP movement.

Furthermore, the ideological and historical perspectives and their implications present in public discourses were freely patched, readjusted and appropriated, creating patchworked, if mutually connected, spatiotemporalities of care. *Patchworks* and *patchworking* became useful metaphors when analysing and interpreting the results and implications of connection processes in the movement. I address these notions in the contexts of relationships between consumers and producers, TP and the state, in Chapter Nine; and concerning ideals and lived relationships in Chapters Five and Seven.

Katherine Verdery in her ethnography on post-socialist Romania shows that the 'need' to sever and then reconnect specific chunks of history in post-socialist and post-Soviet

worlds (including Latvia) was not uncommon; rather it was the normalised practice to 'return' to 'reconnect' histories, one that became prominent, especially in relation to reinstating property rights (1999: 116-117). I write about reinstating and also inventing new property rights in Latvia after 1990 concerning the formation and 'continuation' of the agrarian discourse in Chapter Four.

Chapter 3

Methodology, relationships and positionality in the field

The process of finding the most suitable methods took me a while similar like forming the ultimate research questions. It became clear quite soon that to obtain a comprehensive ethnographic material that represents the different activities and actors of the movement I would need to become present and preferably also a participant on different field sites. The issues of scale and scaling became another important aspect I needed to consider early in my research. Establishing and maintaining relationships with different field participants that I describe in more detail belove was an ongoing process throughout and also after the fieldwork.

Multisited and multiscaled[8] fieldwork

To be able to follow the activities of the movement and comprehend the extent of the broader changes in perceptions and practices in alternative food provisioning in Latvia, I ultimately performed both multi-sited and multiscaled fieldwork. I was eager to observe the movement from all its perspectives: household and public, production, distribution and consumption.

By the end of the fieldwork I have managed accumulate ethnographic material by long term participant observation in the producer (two households) and consumer (one household) families (Chapters Six, Eight and Ten). This

[8] Here I refer to Guntra Aistara's similar multiscaled fieldwork when researching food sovereignties in Latvia and Costa Rica (2018: 26). Although Aistara does not explain explicitly what she means by multiscaled it may be presumed that such fieldwork is done on and between different scales of organic food system, implying in-depth participant observation on producers' farms or in consumers' households as in my case, attendance at educational or policy meetings, following the distribution process and so on.

data is supported with a material from the visits and conversations with producers at their farms; long term participation observation and conversations in the different TP's branches across Latvia as well as becoming a participant of one of the branches in Riga myself (Chapter Nine). Additionally a comprehensive material was accumulated from the observations in different TP's gatherings (Chapter Seven) and in supporting and wider context educational seminars (Chapter Five). Apart from an extensive compilation of fieldnotes and photographic material from the field sites mentioned above I have collected 19 interviews-conversations (some lasting up to several hours and even days). I conducted most of the in-depth interviews in the participants' living spaces, although I also met with some participants in cafes or at their workplaces.

Apart from two long term stays with the producer families I had interviews or rather extended conversations with farmers who participated in the movement (eight interviews/conversations all together). These conversations were held during a day-long visit to their farms.

I decided to begin my fieldwork by immersing myself fully with a long-term (one month) stay with a producer family in Kalniņi farm in July 2015 and follow that up with a consumer Ozoli family in November 2015.

In the final stage of my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to stay with a second producer family at Saulīši farm for a week in June 2016. The first producer family had participated in my previous research, so it was relatively easy to gain initial access to the field; I met the second family in the course of my fieldwork as one of the farms I was attending for an interview initially.

Finding the consumer family was more challenging. I had already learned from my stay with the first producer family that space is a significant issue. My stay with the consumer family needed to be pleasant for both participants and me; therefore, I was looking for a family who had enough space in their apartment or house for my extended visit. Oddly enough, I found the family through a friend in Finland, where I was residing when I started my doctoral studies and continue to live now.

The next task was to negotiate the terms of my stay. It went much more smoothly with the producers as there is always work to do on a farm. The urban lifestyle of consumers is much more restricted in that way. Eventually, when I met with the consumer family to negotiate my stay, we agreed that I would mostly be helping in the kitchen and looking after their three children if necessary. The extended stays with producer and consumer families provided the primary ethnographic material for my dissertation. Apart from observing and participating in various daily activities together with the families, I also took photos of their daily eating practices and the different production stages on the farms. This visual material helped me later in illustrating and thickening my fieldnotes for Chapters Six, Eight, Nine and Ten.

While staying with the families, I also attended weekly activities in the movement's branches. My participation can be divided into two parts according to the intensity of my involvement and the role I played. The first part (Autumn 2015 to March 2016) consisted of my presence at the weekly activities of separate branches – which were on different days in the capital and the various regions. These consisted of two shifts (voluntary work carried out by the participants of each branch) on a single day, usually carried out by a team of two. Shifts started at around 14:00 and continued until around 21:00. I did not insist on taking shifts if the schedule was full, but I always offered my help if someone was ill or did not appear, which happened several times. These occasions were beneficial for my learning about the organisation of the movement. The second part of my attendance at weekly activities started when I became a member of a Riga branch, actively participating in its work from February 2016 until July 2016. Both periods of participant observation were accompanied by detailed written and photographic fieldnotes.

Additionally, I attended TP gatherings which were organised on the occasions of essential changes in the movement, such as when the issue of 'organic transition' appeared (discussed in detail in Chapter Seven). These meetings were held in public seminar spaces and comprised the biggest and most diverse groups of TP participants I encountered during my fieldwork. I also attended several sequential seminars of an educational campaign called

BioLoģiski in Riga and the regions, the main aim of which was to raise general public awareness of organically certified food in Latvia. Attending these meetings gave me a necessary contextual framework for understanding TP.

I have continued to be present in my final 'fieldsite' long after 'physical' fieldwork has come to an end. During years 2017 and partially 2018 I continued to follow Facebook groups, the movement's emailing lists and public media, mainly to follow up issues that started in the field which I have wanted to see through to resolution.

Care(full) relationships and positionality in the field

In addition to the three families who were core participants in my research, I also established quite close and friendly relationships with a few other consumers, meeting them several times and discussing topical issues such as the values of the movement, its directionality and the overall situation with organic food in Latvia. These included the three principal founders and ideological influencers of the TP movement, while several were also active participants in other ongoing organic activities and projects in Latvia during my fieldwork.

It should be noted that it was an entirely different matter to establish rapport with consumers than it was with producers. It was relatively easy to access and plan interviews with consumers by initiating communication through emails or a message on Facebook. In Latvia, a written approach of this sort is a culturally appropriate form of the first contact with someone you do not know and to whom you want to explain your research intentions.

It was, however, very challenging to reach farmers (except the two families of my longer stay). I swiftly discarded the idea of writing to them as I did not receive a single reply to my emails. It turned out that the only way I could reach them was by phone – a subjectively challenging and often unpleasant experience for me as I do not fancy calling as a form of initial communication. I also had a feeling that the quick and abrupt nature of a phone call discourages the inherently slow and gradually built nature of proper trustful rapport (Kuehne 2016: 11). Nevertheless, with every call, I

slowly improved my 'main message' and style of conversation. I realised that I needed to 'sell' them my research, and I needed to do it very fast and concisely because the busy rush and ceaseless rhythm of their lives could be heard in the way they spoke and even in the background of our conversations. For example, on one occasion I reached a farmer when she was feeding lambs, so a noisy choir of bleating accompanied our conversation.

Gaining trust and establishing rapport was not an easy task even after I 'sold' my wish to research the farmers and arrived at the farms for one-day visits during which I was also conducting interviews. In many cases, farmers mistook me for a journalist, and I encountered several anecdotal cases because of this, while some wanted me only to photograph the nice-looking parts of their farms. Another not-so-funny side effect of this misperception was that farmers did not want to open up and tell me stories of their hardships and communication problems with governing institutions and consumers. They thought that I would uncover and make public things which are meant to be left untold; losing business contacts or other significant relationships with governing institutions, for example, would be harmful to them. Overall, the feeling that my pre-field preparation before meeting the farmers was incomplete never left me, and I remained active in continual self-education in methods for conducting fieldwork among farmers during fieldwork (Kuehne 2016; Pratt and Luetchford 2013).

Many of the hurdles and bumps in my fieldwork that I describe above were undoubtedly affected by my positionality, especially when it came to reaching out and accessing producers. The farming world has never been my cup of tea as I have no physical links with an agricultural past in my family for generations (for more on the agricultural path in Latvia, see Chapter Four). My roots are in the working class (or, at least, what would equal a working class in 'Western' perceptions, but called the proletariat in the Soviet Union), with my family coming from a relatively small town, close to the capital, Riga, and residing in a three-story *khrushchevka*.[9] I cannot count as

[9] Susan Reid, in her extensive research on the implications of care towards living space in post-Soviet Russia (2018) writes, "The affectionate nickname "khrushchevki" strictly refers to a specific early series of

entirely valid my gardening experiences in childhood on the tiny plot that my family, like many others, worked on to secure necessary food supplies against a backdrop of ever-present shortages.

Therefore, before my fieldwork, my impressions and knowledge of Latvian organic farmers conformed with the widely spread and reproduced public discourse about an emptying, struggling and suffering countryside and its labourers that was the result of the neoliberal approach when restoring agricultural production in post-Soviet Latvia (Dzenovska 2012, Tīsenkopfs 1999). On the other hand, the side of my work life background (in media and later advertising, prior to joining academia) that began in Riga at the beginning of the 2000s was very helpful in accessing consumers and establishing a rather quick rapport with most of them. Many were in the same or close age, economic and status group, one that could be seen as an aspiring middle class. We shared the experiences of a post-Soviet generation, and it felt like we all were fuelled by an unacknowledged inner wish for bettering (often building from scratch) our own lives and those of generations to follow. I reckon that my profoundly subjective and intimate decision to research the TP movement was rooted in my deeply caring attitude towards my generation and its labours because I saw TP as a manifestation of such life-bettering practice.

In general, the socioeconomic composition of TP participants – both producers and consumers – was as patchworked as the work and ideals of the movement. It is hard to place either farmers or consumers in some uniting homogenous social class or social status category. The producers, who represented the age group from around 30 to over 70, fell into at least in four different categories: those who started organic farming directly after independence; those who adopted the organic path after Latvia joined the EU in 2004; those who were moving towards organic farming because they had started farming recently (around the time I conducted fieldwork); and those, representing home producers, who would probably never shift to organic farming simply because their operations were too small (see Chapter Seven). The consumers also represented different

system-built housing, K-7, but is often used more broadly to refer to the low-rise standard blocks of this era." (in Grosmann and Nielsen ed. 2018).

social and economic groups with different lifestyles. Some, mostly in the regional branches, came from farming families and wanted to support the hard work of the producers with their purchases. Some were urban intellectuals or worked in creative occupations, and there was also a range of middle-level professionals with all kinds of educational backgrounds. As I have noted above, the consumers largely shared common ideals and values and, most importantly, all were ready to commit to voluntary care work to sustain the movement.

Finally, my being away while living and studying in Helsinki provided me at least partially with an outsider's gaze and the necessary space to re-assess my caring attitude and balance its ethical, affective and practical impact on my work process, beginning with ethnographic fieldwork and ending with the conceptualisations and discussion that I provide in this work.

The caring attitude also stretched to the research ethics that I followed throughout this study. Before starting participant observation and conversations in my different fieldsites I had to ensure that my research participants agreed to their involvement in the project by explaining the purpose of the research in detail. They gave me their verbal consent to participate and I gave my promise that I would not use any of the material I had collected which they wanted to be left out of the dissertation. I replaced real names with pseudonyms. It was agreed that any sensitive information that came up which could harm my research participants would stay within the research environment and our mutual conversations.

Chapter 4

History: care about nature and small farms

This chapter examines the historical benchmarks that help to explain the ideological rootedness of TP, demonstrating the importance, appropriation and entanglement of historical notions and discourses including the element of care for nature, nation and land in the formation of Latvian national identity. This also lays the foundations for a discussion of how the work of the movement serves as a means to maintain and repair these entanglements considering that they can be kickstarted, patchworked and ruptured on ideological as well as practical levels.

Zita, one of the founders and leaders of TP, used to repeat to consumers and producers in e-mails and at the movement's various gatherings that one of its primary priorities is its care about and for a cleaner, better nature, one that can be maintained and sustained for generations to come.

Such an approach is not uncommon in the context of the work of similar alternative food movements across the world. In light of growing social anxiety about the inevitability of the effects of climate change, care about and for the surrounding environment and nature – whatever these mean in different social, economic and political contexts – has become a fundamental motivation and aim for a range of food provisioning practices, often incorporating the full production, consumption and reproduction cycle. Indeed, it stands alongside other solid motivations such as care for one's own and one's family's health and wellbeing. Yet scholars researching operations in alternative food provisioning systems have pointed out that their underlying motivations and values must not be assumed; rather, they should be viewed as complex totalities in which separate value systems inform and affect each other. Furthermore, individual and collective motivations are often inseparable, as they are intertwined

to secure the greater good (Grasseni 2013; Kneafsey et al. 2008).

Consequently, self-care may be regarded as reaching out, and include care for the family, the significant social group and the surrounding environment (Lammer 2017; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Jarosz 2011).

Equally, the interconnectedness of the motivations and values behind alternative provisioning movements must be viewed in light of the effects of various historical and contextual irregularities. In the introduction to 'Ethical Eating in the Postsocialist and Socialist World' (2014), Klein, Jung and Caldwell propose examining such irregularities by challenging the understandings of alternative food systems and the value systems behind them in postsocialist and socialist societies in at least two ways. Firstly, they show that values and motivations which could be seen as contradictory in the perceptions of Western alternative food systems (such as opposition to industrial farming and large scale food processing) could be seen as a path towards ethical consumption in such societies, where they are trying to merge existing perceptions about clean, good food with the challenges of the market economy and global standardisation systems. Secondly, the authors point out that in the socialist and postsocialist worlds many of the practices that have eventually become alternative in the West – such as self-grown food, foraging and barter – have been known and practised for a long time in many parts of the world; farmers' exchanging produce in the countryside was a common phenomenon in my fieldwork. Thus, they are not alternative practices but the continuation of the normality of food provisioning and 'part of everyday life' (Klein, Jung and Caldwell 2014: 9-12).

The TP movement is embedded in the post-Soviet spatiotemporality of constant insecurity and confusion (Dzenovska 2012; Cimdiņa and Raubiško 2012; Sedlenieks 2012), in which producers and consumers are trying to find the best possible solutions to take care of their families and community and the environment they inhabit. Besides, such spatiotemporality is layered with the imaginary of a pre-Soviet *ideal* (Aistara 2018; Priedīte 2012; Schwartz 2006; Tisenkopfs 1999) and global rhythms of standardisation and marketisation (Aistara 2018; West 2012). All these elements must be considered equally and

as connected when trying to understand the complexity of embedded ideology and the development of the motivations, values and ideals underpinning the movement.

The birth of the myth of care about nation and nature

Linking nature to the reproduction of a nation and state, thereby affirming that nature is a substantial component of a nation's identity, is a widely employed ideological strand that became popular with the rise of the first massive nationalist and nation-state movements from the mid-19th to the early 20th century, mainly in Europe.

Although nature has been an object or, as Strathern puts it, a 'thing',[10] of scientific, political and economic inquiry since the Enlightenment, its link to the nation-state is the result of many interrelated large scale changes in the political and economic order across the world, particularly in what is labelled 'Western' culture. Among those were the Industrial Revolution, the rise of industrial capitalism and the consolidations of modernity. The major transformations also introduced unprecedented social changes that were manifested in the birth of nation-states at one end of the new societal configurations and nuclear families at the other (Weintraub and Kumar 1997).

The growth of the *imagination* (Anderson 2006) and *invention* (Gellner and Breuilly 1983) that led to the making of nation-states across Europe was far from homogenous. Very simply put, there were 'real' nations – those that nowadays fall into the category of Western Europe – and those which Wolff (1994) has designated as invented in Eastern Europe by Western Europeans, which often also fell into the category of 'small people'[11] nations.

[10] In her work, 'The Gender of the Gift' (1988), Strathern compares the attribution of value to persons, objects and activities in Western and Melanesian societies. Referring to long term, ongoing research on commodities and gifts (Gregory 1982; Sahlins 2017 [1972]) Strathern argues that in the West 'capabilities available to the person and the resources available to society are construed as 'things' having a prior natural or utilitarian value in themselves' (Strathern 1988: 135).

[11] The definition of 'small people' by Miroslav Hroch alludes to nationalities without an independent history or political rule: nationalities that have been historically oppressed by

The tremendous socio-political transformations mentioned above-created conditions in which such small nations acquired the growing power of self-awareness that leads to national movements and eventually nation-states (Schwartz 2006).

Nature in this shifting new world order became a useful tool and trope for identification in the process of building nation-states, as it was seen not only as a geographical and biological representation of the environment in which the nation resided but also an element in the constitution of its culture and history (Schwartz 2006:34). Initially induced by *völkisch* nationalism, environmental determinism and the notions [12] of pre-romantic German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1804), perceptions of the close link between nation and nature also played an important role in the building of the Latvian nation-state and Latvian national identity in the 19th and 20th centuries.

During the 'birth' of the Latvian nation in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, active New Latvians[13] were split into two groups, following the general trend that affected small nations across Eastern Europe. This entailed a restless juggling between the national and the cosmopolitan, the goal being to be sufficiently national to be recognised as a nation worthy of the name, meanwhile remaining open to more universal influences (Jerzy Jedlicky in Schwartz 2006: 31). Thus, a nationalistic group headed by Atis Kronvalds (1837-1875) promoted the ideology of Latvians as a nation of peasants gaining power from the land; this followed the general trend of up-scaling the 'peasantness' of what Hroch calls 'small people', mainly across Eastern Europe.[14] This group's main interest was to

bigger and more powerful nations, what Hobsbawm calls the states of imperialist chauvinism. Small people nationalities, according to Hroch, have also not had steady cultural reproduction in their literary language (1985 in Schwartz 2006: 28).

[12] One of Herder's most referenced and influential notions was that the nation (*das Volk*) should be defined by its language and culture rather than by its political and economic dominance (in Schwartz 2006: 29).

[13] A social and cultural movement of young educated Latvians that promoted national awareness and appropriated German geographers' notions of *Heimat* (homeland) and nature as entities containing the nation's specific geographical environment as well as its culture and history (Schwartz 2006).

[14] Katrina Schwartz writes about the dilemma that was facing all *small people* nations that aimed for greater recognition among the bigger nations: the necessity to turn the backwardness of peasantness into potential and a new selling point (using marketing terms)

get rid of the 'German yoke' and create a strong land-owning Latvian identity. Another group, headed by Krišjānis Valdemārs (1825-1891), was more cosmopolitan. He adopted and promoted both the ideas of Herder and *Heimat* (homeland) ideology, of knowing one's own land, and also the understanding that the right path for Latvians to becoming a real nation with rights to education and citizenship lay in staying close to, and even becoming an integral part of, the Russian Empire. Although Valdemārs believed in agrarian reform and wholeheartedly advocated small-scale land ownership, he also worked to create an identity for Latvians as great seafarers, believing that the betterment of the Latvian nation economically and politically would come from its well-developed ports and merchant fleets (Schwartz 2006: 32-38).

Nevertheless, as the Latvian nation developed over the following decades, it became clear that the production of Heimat perceptions in Latvia did not rest on vast industrialisation or an abundance of natural resources. Instead, a constant hunger for farmland was 'central to the Latvian nation and state-building' (Schwartz, 2006). Furthermore, from the 1920s nature was neither a bountiful wilderness nor an industrialised landscape; rather it was characterised by tender, hard work executed by gardeners – by *saimnieks*[15] on their own land.

Almost a century later, conducting fieldwork in 2015 and 2016, I found that the significance of *human-made nature* as described by Schwartz was still one of the defining constants of the 'nation' among the participants in the TP movement. However, the important changes that the country has experienced since its first nation-state building attempts have affected the ways human-labour-land

that is at the core of national awareness. That makes each *small people's* nation worthy to become a Nation (Schwarz 2006: 32).

[15] The noun *saimnieks* (master/host – semantically a carer for one's own farm or household – semantically a combination between all), *saimniece* (mistress/hostess – semantically a combination between both). Another noun I use in this work is *saimniecība* (farmstead/household; often used also to describe economy and economics on different scale). The verb *saimniekot* literally translates as 'to manage a farm' and that is the context where it is most used. Yet it can also describe taking charge of things and managing any kind of activity where work and taking care of materialities, people, animals and plants are involved. the terms listed derive from a noun *saime*, meaning a household (before WWII all who were living and working at the same farmstead) or larger family unit (that can also include grandparents, cousins and similar).

relationships are conceptualised and practised. I side with Guntra Aistara's suggestion that Latvia in the 21st century should be viewed as the quintessence of betweenness: a country that is somewhere between the Global North and the West-East divide, neither undergoing development nor yet developed (2018: 5). In my work, I build on this understanding of in-betweenness; rooting it in discussions about care. I approach it as a process of multilayered patchworking that happens jointly in time and space/place (discussed in Chapters Two, Five and Nine).

In the next section, I address the trope of human-made nature as one manifestation of such in-betweenness or patchworking, and also as a process of conceptualisation from 'nature to culture'. This enables access to the situated value systems and their enactments in the social organisation and relations of the TP movement, understood both as a symbolic landmark and an analytical challenge.

The countryside as human-made nature

In Latvia, all the municipalities outside cities of more than 5,000 inhabitants are considered *lauku teritorijas* (rural territories), although a document produced with the co-finance of the European Union suggests that a concentration of 2,000 inhabitants should be regarded as city territory; the same document also points out that there is no definition of *lauki* (countryside) or rural territory in current Latvian legislation. This obscureness of perception and interpretation can be viewed as part of the Soviet heritage when there was no official distinction between country and city.[16] Nevertheless, according to data from 2012, 32% of the country's inhabitants live in rural territories.[17]

When movement participants spoke about reconnecting to nature through food, they were usually referring as much to reconnecting with the countryside as a spatiotemporality

[16] Latvijas lauku telpas attīstība http://www.laukutikls.lv/sites/laukutikls.lv/files/informativie_materiali/latvijaslaukutelpasattistibauntasiespejamienakotnesscenarijipetijumslr.pdf

[17] Lauku attīstības programma 2014.-2020. https://www.zm.gov.lv/public/files/CMS_Static_Page_Doc/00/00/01/19/86/Programme_2014LV06RDNP001_5_1_lv.pdf

that bears both symbolic and ideological importance, as to the physical enactment of practices in which the food is produced. I examine the relationships between the countryside (the spatiotemporality of production) and city (where produce is exchanged and consumed) in the context of food provisioning through the notion of reconnection in Chapters Five and Nine.

Social scientists addressing the concept of lauki in Latvia in their research have shown that it should be viewed as both as an 'empirical unit' and a 'discursively constructed object of knowledge and target of intervention' (Dzenovska and Aistara 2014: 2-3); it is a representational and material entity characterised by real relations between people and place that are central in the imaginary and understanding of 'the good life' for the nation: indeed, the 'nation's lifeline' (ibid.). This interpretation facilitates perceptions of the countryside as a dynamic and changing spatiotemporality that is imagined and lived at the same time (Šūmane 2011; Cloke 2006).

Another strand of research on the Latvian countryside has addressed the contradictory positionality of the term lauki and its representations in post-Soviet contextualities. More than two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reinstatement of agrarian politics within the framework of market liberalization, the Latvian countryside is described as a medley of real lives and possibilities, as well as emptiness, ruin and hopelessness. (Dzenovska and Aistara 2014; Cimdiņa un Raubiško 2012). Such ambivalence is part of a broader discourse about rural space in Europe in general, especially in the context of crafting a standardised EU organic farming policy (Gray 2000). On the one hand, the discourse addressing the reproduction of cultural and national identities sees the countryside as rooted in and sustained by small family farms which should, in themselves, symbolise 'ideal' rurality. On the other hand, the need to belong to the neoliberal market economy, which requires competitiveness and large-scale agribusinesses, draws attention to the (lower) productivity aspects of the *small* and the 'ideal' when it comes to farming. Such historically contradictory emplacedness of countryside both in scientific discourses and in overarching policies across Europe has put a strain on the rural as it is experienced and lived on an everyday basis, with small farmers trying to live the ideal, meanwhile managing their

work and livelihoods within agricultural, state and EU-level economic schemes.

The additional confusion stemming from ongoing changes in post-Soviet territories, including Latvia, adds to this constraint, spurring researchers to regard the countryside – especially in its idealised incarnation – as a trope for such ambivalence (Dzenovska 2012; Mincyte 2011; Tisenkopfs 1999; Dzenovska and Aistara 2014). The constant shifting and shuffling between ideals, popular discourses and lived experience shapes a countryside in which the despair and accelerating emptiness that is common across Europe cohabits with the lived and emplaced realities of agribusinesses and tenacious small farms. Consequently, the principles and to some extent the practice of TP stress the acceptance of, and connection with, the contradictory positionality and perceptions of rural Latvia. Consumers who join the movement, therefore, are invited to recognise that by buying and eating the food produced by farmers in the movement, and through meeting and establishing friendly relations with them, they connect the city with human-made Latvian nature. Supporting farmers by virtue of the food they consume makes consumers a part of this contradictory patchwork of despair and emptiness but also of work and life in the countryside, thus reinforcing its role as the 'nation's lifeline'.

Care for the land: towards the first agrarian reforms

The care for human-made nature is closely connected to relationships with the land in the shape of the hard work performed by the inhabitants of an individual farmstead or *viensēta*. In the context of this study, a viensēta can be viewed as a consolidation and manifestation of imagined and enacted entanglements of care in production (more on this in Chapter Eight). In broader popular discourse, the notion of the viensēta has been created and reproduced as an essentialized symbol of the Latvian nation: hard-working farmers on their private land (Ločmele 2014; Schwartz 2006; Eglitis 2002). This notion was created and strengthened during the first agrarian reforms and the birth of nation-nature ideas that took place from the end of the 19th to the middle of the 20th centuries, a period in the

nation's history consisting of several shorter idealised periods.

According to Guntra Aistara (2018) and Kristina Schwarz (2006), one such period can be considered the time of what is called *pirmā neatkarība* (first independence) lasting from roughly 1920 to 1940. This began with the first large scale agrarian reform to grant the historically landless inhabitants of Latvia parcels of land.

Aistara notes that this reform (another followed in the 1990s after regaining the independence) is seen as a 'defining feature' of the first independence period. Indeed, prevalent contemporary discourses still idealise this period and its agrarian reform, romanticising the link between smallholderism, national independence and land reform and reproducing it at the state and everyday levels (Aistara 2018: 34)

Historian Arnolds Aizsilnieks in his comprehensive work on the history of Latvia's economy ("Latvijas saimniecības vesture 1914-1945", 1968) writes that during WWI when the nascent Latvian state experienced high refugee flows, amounting to 30% or 730,000 of the country's inhabitants, many peasants (round 39.5% of the population) who had property were prompted to abandon and destroy all that they had before becoming refugees, with the Russian government promising they would be compensated for their losses. Not surprisingly, due to the massive ensuing chaos in both the provinces of the Russian Empire as well as Russia itself, such compensation was rarely claimed or received (Aizsilnieks 1968 19-27).

Aizsilnieks writes that up to that time the farmland and forests of Latvia belonged mainly to the nobility – German in Kurzeme and Vidzeme and Polish in Latgele – with 820 families owning 48% or 650,000ha of all land. Yet, in July 1916, the Tzar of Russia cancelled all the rights and privileges of the Baltic nobility. During the period of the Provisional Government in Russia in 1917, landless communist unions organised the arbitrary confiscation of estates in Vidzeme and Latgale, although these activities were jeopardised by the Provisional Government which saw them as anarchist arbitrariness. Further, as the communist rule continued to be present in Russia, the territory of Latvia that was not occupied by the Germans, mainly in Vidzeme and Latgale, was soon declared to belong to the

state and therefore not supposed to be owned as private property. As the declaration was proposed during the 2nd Latvian Congress of Workers, Soldiers and the Landless, demands by peasants for their own little parcel of land were discovered that soon created dissension among the peasants (Aizsilnieks 1968 19-27).

When all the land that was in the territory ruled by the communists was nationalised after the communist coup at the end of 1917, part of it remained the 'property' of its prior owners, farmers. However, peasants legally became only the leaseholders of the land although, as would be the case some decades later under Soviet rule, they had the responsibility to till and take proper care of it (Aizsilnieks 1968: 19–27). In 1918 a German commander-in-chief cancelled all the decrees issued by Russian revolutionaries and landless and soldiers. All who had the landowner rights could reclaim them again (1968: 56).

Before and after the declaration of the new Latvian State on November 18, 1918, the country experienced considerable turmoil at the hands of the Great Powers (Purs 2013: 43–46). Shortly before its independence was declared, Germany attempted a detailed colonization plan, one that had begun several hundred years earlier and was still ongoing in Kurzeme. The program was to divide the manor lands and sell or hand them over to the German farmers who would be repatriated from Russia or brought to Latvia straight from Germany. As Aizsilnieks writes, these plans never ceased to exist throughout the decades Latvia was an independent state (1968: 66-68). Despite these machinations, an independent Latvian state was established in November 1918 as the only viable option that would show that 'Latvians no longer had common ground with either a German or Russian dominated state' (Purs 2013: 45). This was not an end to the matter, however, as, following the developments that brought the Communist Party into power in Russia, the recently established and unstable nation was still under threat. The new Provisional Government with Kārlis Ulmanis as its leader was forced to flee to Liepāja at the beginning of 1919 while the freshly established Latvian Soviet Government with Pēteris Stučka at its head agreed to incorporate Latvia into Soviet Russia. This arrangement, gradually deteriorating as the Russian army was expelled from Latvian territory as a result of a war of independence, lasted until August 1920 when a peace

treaty between Latvia and Soviet Russia was signed. Yet the Soviet rule, although brief, had once again strongly affected agricultural politics in Latvia as denationalised lands were nationalised once more with all the livestock and other property that they contained (Aizsilnieks 1968: 84-85).

Meanwhile, from the beginning of 1919, the Provisional Government of independent Latvia started crafting plans for agrarian reform that became one of the defining benchmarks in Latvian land ownership and management – as well as the framework for the ideology of land-human-nation relationships – and is still followed today.

As new nation-states were being formed in many parts of Europe around that time, their new governments began to see potential in the landless peasants. Socialist ideas about the importance of labour and labourers were merged with nationalist aspirations by 'disarming' Bolshevism and making it safely through to peaceful agrarianism. In Latvia, a 'new class' of landowning farmers was created, one that was supposed to become the core of the new nation's identity (Schwartz 2006: 43-44).

The main aims of the first Latvian agrarian reform were to dissolve the monopoly on the land of the big landowners, usually of German descent, and to redistribute it to mainly landless inhabitants of the new state. As a result, by 1929 there were 216,309 landowners compared to 83,117 in 1905 and 50.6% of the land under cultivation comprised small farms of up to 30ha (Skujenieks 1938). In 1937, 16% of the farms, mainly in Latgale, in eastern Latvia, were under 1ha in size (Stranga, Aivars 2017: 75); in 1935, privately owned and worked farms comprised 85% of agricultural land (Strods 1992: 160; 174). As the aim of the agrarian reform was to distribute the land as to many inhabitants as possible, small and even tiny farms became a defining entity in the first agrarian reform, and their symbolic, as well as practical manifestation, became paramount throughout the political, social and economic changes that the country underwent in the following decades.

Spatiotemporalities of no-care?

In May 2016 as I was conducting the interviews with TP producers across Latvia, 62-year-old Valts gave me a lift to the bus stop that was located a few kilometres from their farm. During the short ride, he was happy to 'open up' and offer a short version of his own experiences of farming, which began in 1992. Back at the farm during my visit, his wife, Daina, did most of the talking, and even in the car Valts was rather short and seemingly awkward with words, yet he managed to tell me, with noticeable pride, that he saw his family as true survivors, almost winners.

Despite all the crises that have haunted farmers in Latvia since regaining independence, they were still here and not only surviving but living well. Valts suggested that this was partly also due to their having gone through the 'school' of *Breša zemnieki* (around 8,000 farmsteads that were involved in an experiment in late Soviet Latvia named after Vilnis E. Bresis, leader of the Latvian Soviet Council of Ministers in the late 1980s). The initiative was part of a more significant change in control over agricultural production in the republics of the Soviet Union, and also an unacknowledged move towards reinstating individual farming practices in Latvia which, as in other republics, had proved more efficient in the final decades of the Soviet Union (Krūmiņš 2009).

The official reason proclaimed by the Party for the transition to Breša zemnieki was the stagnation of the existing system, and the search for new – or, in this case, reinstated and renovated – production practices that could compete with kolkhozes, and boost farming in the Soviet Union again. It was not an attempt to re-establish private ownership of land; rather, it promoted the individual farming system as a mode of production given that it was legal to farm-specific land in the long term, a loophole used mainly by the kolkhozes.

At that time, a secure, state-guaranteed system took care of building infrastructures, such as roads, communication systems, wells and general melioration; the state also provided 'cheap' credits for buying equipment and developing the farms (from an interview with Vilnis Bresis published in *Latvijas Vēstnesis* 1998). In popular

discourse, this group came to be regarded as the elite among farmers.

Valts thinks that these advantages gained in the final days of the Soviet Union, even before Latvia was again proclaimed an independent state, were significant, although he laments that what came after was chaos and devastation. Nonetheless, he remembers with warmth the first years after independence when their farm achieved notable results and became a success story, an example of hardworking Latvian saimnieks humbly husbanding the land in their viensēta. He felt proud to be invited to official receptions in Riga along with fellow success story farmers. Since then they had experienced many changes. Their small goat farm, where he, his wife Daina and their two sons had been living and working for ten years at the time of my visit, had around 150 goats in the summer of 2016 and was a well-managed enterprise. They had obtained the farm from former *izsūtītie* (deportees), two sisters who had shared it but were too old care for a ravaged farm that demanded a greater input of labour and money than they had at their disposal.

The narrative of Breša zemnieki marks the final years of Soviet rule in Latvia and partially helps to explain the continuing influence of the Soviet Union, ruptures in the proceedings of agrarian politics and farming practices in Latvia after regaining independence. On the one hand, the 'creation' of Breša zemnieki was seemingly a direct continuation of Soviet agrarian politics aimed at increasing collective productivity; on the other, the reinstatement and 'legalisation' of an individualised form of farming practice created a space in which ideas about a return to individual farms and proper land ownership could be cultivated – at least in the perceptions of the farmers themselves.

Another similarly important 'transition' time in Latvian agrarian history over the last 100 years was the agrarian reform performed as 'dekulakisation' and collectivisation during the second annexation of Latvia into the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1950.

A closer look at these transition periods in the first and the final years of the Soviet Union clarifies the role of smallholders and individual farms in the formation of the prominent public discourse framing Latvians as 'a nation of peasants', which is sustained and reproduced in how

Latvian national identity is perceived today. This discourse is also represented in the ideology behind the three main values – organic principles, friendship and volunteerism – of TP, producing a form of *cultural intimacy* (Herzfeld 2014). According to Michael Herzfeld, cultural intimacy is 'sense of internal security', frequently highly fragile, which institutional structures create and manage to sustain throughout shifts in history. Herzfeld goes on to suggest that, although they are very often viewed as 'backwards, inappropriate or immoral' from the point of view of the ruling power and the state, manifestations of cultural intimacy can lead societies through the ebb and flow of ruling structures and ideologies (Herzfeld 2014: 50–61). Self-perceptions of 'a nation of peasants' in the form of hard-working, farming households somewhere in the Latvian countryside can be viewed as a cultural intimacy that has served as an energising mode for 'getting through' history. On the other hand, the designation also carries the potential for shame as its holders have been regarded as unnecessary, backward or even dangerous by several power regimes throughout the same history (the Soviet Union and, later, the Government of independent Latvia, discussed in more detail in the next section). People did not emphasise the importance of this aspect of 'national identity' in the course of TP's everyday operations, although it fuels its care work and is present at an intimate and non-verbalised level. Thus, it should be kept in mind when interpreting the activities of the movement against the backdrop of its historical context.

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After WWII the eradication of the individual farming model was implemented in several stages (Bleiere 2005; Strods 2005), beginning with the elimination of *kulak* farms and moving towards full collectivisation. Immediately after the war, private land that was bigger than 20ha was nationalised (Strods 2005: 218); next, from 1947 repressive economic tools were applied, such as raising the taxation rate for kulak farms, which in 1947 was around 12-17 times higher per hectare than that for the most impoverished farms and 4-5 times higher than that for middle-range farms (Bleiere 2005: 244; Swain 2003).

Further, kulak farmers could not join a kolkhoz (collective farm) even if they wanted to (Bleiere 2005: 245). The 'isolation' process culminated in the deportation of more than 13,000 families (around 43,000 people, though exact numbers vary according to the author and are hard to estimate) on 25 March 1949 (Bleiere 2005: 245). Following the deportations in June 1941 – those in 1949 'contributed' substantially to the general collectivisation process in the Latvian SSR, which had been proceeding very slowly and reluctantly (Bleiere 2005; Swain 2003; Plakans 2011). In the resolution issued by USSR Council of Ministers, the forced relocation was formulated as a 'measure of help' for the agriculture of the three Baltic republics (Swain 2003: 55).

After the deportations, the number of collective farms in the republic's territory rose from 890 small kolkhozes or 10.2% of all homesteads in January 1949 to 1,740 new farms or 71.6% by 1 May 1949 (Bleiere 2005: 247). By 1950 almost all farming territory in Latvia, around 90%, was collectivised, dekulakised and the agriculture transformed (Plakans 2011; Swain 2003; Strods 1992).

The official and widely reproduced propaganda by the Latvian Communist Party (CPL) in the early post-WWII period was that the collectivisation and two land reforms that followed the two Soviet occupations were the means to the goal of granting land to the landless and the poorest farmers, while large scale collectivisation was seen as something that would happen only in some remote future (Bleiere 2005: 246).

This propaganda was simultaneously overshadowed by that disseminated by the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party that stated that collectivisation across the entire Soviet territory should be carried out on a strictly voluntary basis (Bleiere 2005: 247).

Bleiere calls the repression of farmers in Latvian territory between 1944 and 1953 'social genocide', stressing that the complex system of collectivization that was introduced both 'from above' and 'from outside' shattered previous social organisation in the Latvian countryside. Furthermore, she notes that it cannot be claimed that the Soviet Union secured any social modernization of the peasantry despite the official propaganda (2005: 255).

The aim of collectivisation and dekulakisation in the newly formed Soviet Union was to secure economic and, more importantly, political power. Politically it was essential to minimise the power of the peasantry (Schwartz 2006; Bleiere 2005), which required the destruction of the social organisation and the foundations of the ideological, economic and political systems on which Baltic countries rested before WWII (Bleiere 2005; Kirby 1995). The long-term result of collectivisation, which resulted in the liquidation of farming as it had been conducted before WWII, was that the countryside emptied. Between 1940 and 1985 the population of rural Latvia halved, from 65% to 29% of the total population (Schwartz 2006: 55), a trend resembling that in the so-called developed parts of the world around that time. However, the reasons for, and the outcome of, such population decline were very different (Strods 1992).

The ultimate aim of rulers of the Soviet Union was to eradicate individual homesteads by 1985 and organise the life of the general population in cities and collectivised countryside centres. At the official level, such activities were proclaimed as utterly utilitarian, as facilitating land reclamation; however, Schwartz notes that at the symbolic level they represented the eradication of the independent farmstead (viensēta) that has become a paramount element in constructing national identity. The hard-working farming family in their own viensēta has become a shared national imaginary, 'an embodiment of the Latvian mentality' (2006: 58-59).

It can only be speculated whether this 'embodiment of Latvian mentality' was entirely erased during the Soviet years. Despite the overwhelming Soviet politics of collectivisation and elimination, to some extent, the ability of farmers to pursue some kind of individual saimniekošana (husbandry, caring for the land) continued throughout the whole period of Soviet rule in the form of small subsistence plots and allotment gardens, although compulsory levies on even these labours had to be handed over for further collective redistribution at the level of the Soviet Union (Bleiere 2005: 248). Meanwhile, farmers who found ways to continue on individual plots, refusing to join the collective farms, were subjected to continual repression in the first decades of Soviet rule (ibid.: 253).

The dormant 'nation of peasants' and viensēta imaginaries, however, were enlivened during the final decade of the Soviet Union. As it approached dissolution, small plots were flourishing and in 1985, for instance, around a quarter of all meat and dairy produced in the Latvian SSR was secured from individually run farms (Krūmiņš 2009: 246; Schwartz 2006: 82). [18] The omnipresent and growing economic insufficiency in the Soviet Union also raised queries about the only acknowledged and possible form of food production – the collective farms. Gradually individual labour was legitimised, culminating in 1987 when a law was passed, applying to the entire USSR, that legitimised individual work in the goods and services sectors (Krūmiņš 2009: 248).

In 1988 executives of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR decided to prioritise agricultural production over industrial production for the first time since the 1940s. Although the majority of the decision's supporters still prioritised collective production over the individual, Krūmiņš argues that it was a critical and historic decision not only on the political and economic but also on the ideological level (2009: 252-253).

A decade earlier, in the mid-1970s, a group of activists, the Great Tree Liberation Movement, had emerged in Latvia, following the lead of environmentally concerned writers in Siberia who opposed the urbanising and industrialising nature of the Soviet Union. In a neo-Herderian manner, Russian writers spoke about the importance of nature in the construction of the 'Russian national soul', while in Latvia, the tree liberation group was founded by a popular poet, Imants Ziedonis, and other intellectuals of the time. They aimed to protect 'traditional Latvian landscape' in which the central element was a lone old oak standing in the middle of a field or close to a farmstead, trees whose existence was endangered by industrialised Soviet agricultural practices. Driven by Herderian notions of nationhood that is linked to place, to the land on which Latvians live and work, the activities of the Tree Liberation Movement grew in prominence and the ideas that circulated among its participants became 'louder'. The destruction of the individual farmstead was seen as an

[18] For more on the productivity of small plot farming in the Baltics in last decade of Soviet Union see Boruks (1995); Misiunas and Taagepera (1993).

attack by the Soviet Union on the core of the Latvian national identity (Schwartz 2006: 60-69).

Environmental activism expanded across the Soviet Union in the 1980s as both localised and nationally driven opposition to the official rule that threatened to destroy essential and valued elements of the natural landscape that were important to local and national identity preservation. In Latvia, activism targeted a hydroelectric dam project on the country's biggest river, the Daugava, close to Daugavpils. The movement against the dam, which later became the Environmental Protection Club, played an important role in forming a National Front in the process of regaining independence. Reflecting this, several scholars (Dawson 1996; Kirby 2014) have pointed out that such environmental activism was a form of nationalism, which also explains why such movements dissolved soon after independence was regained. However, Schwartz stresses that viewing the nature-nation connection as only instrumental misses the deeply intertwined connection between the two tropes that have formed over the course of history. Even if environmental issues have disappeared from later post-Soviet economic and political agendas, they have remained active on the horizontal level of small-scale activism (Schwartz 2006: 70-71).

Throughout this study, I have tried to understand whether the TP movement can be viewed as this kind of small scale and barely visible activism. Given that the movement's roots lie in the Environmental Protection Club – the leaders of the movement have been active participants in the environmental NGOs spawned by the Club – can TP be regarded as a continuation of embodied perceptions and mentality of nature, environment and nation that I have described above? In what follows, I explore and describe the patches of historical narratives that I have briefly introduced above. These narratives in their often imagined, abrupt and fragmented forms occurred and were transmitted in the ideals and everyday practices of the participants of the movement.

Back to the land, back to small, towards organic

Agrarian reform after independence started as a political act but transformed into a cultural and historical movement. People who turned to the land to begin anew or continue as reconstituted land labourers from the kolhozes had different motivations: some wished to pattern their way of life on that of their grandparents and parents, some were driven by economic necessity or were starting a business, and some simply chose it because it was their life in the Soviet Union (Tīsenkopfs 1999: 416).

Reform was carried out in several stages and opinions vary among researchers as to exactly when it started and for how long it lasted. The primary dispute has been over whether the legislation that came into force and was applied in the final two years of the Soviet Union can be regarded as the beginning of agrarian reform or not. Nevertheless, most scholars tend to side with the opinion that the first steps were taken the year before the official agrarian reform of the independent Republic of Latvia, which came into force 13 June 1990 (Krūmiņš 2009: 262-263).

The law on individual farming that was passed 3 October 1988 stipulated that, firstly, a farmstead could be inherited even though officially it was not seen as the private property of the owner; secondly, the farmer could hire a workforce; finally, it was not compulsory for produce to be handed in for redistribution and the farmer could decide what to do with it. These three points served as the basis for the later Law on Land Reform in 1990. Furthermore, the state took on the responsibility for maintaining and meliorating road infrastructure. New farmers received favourable bank loans and could obtain the necessary machinery at wholesale price. The recommended size of the new farms, which became the Breša zemnieki, started from 20ha (Krūmiņš 2009: 255-257). Largely because the new law reinstated the rights of pre-1940s landowners, further actions and legislation executed by the new government of independent Latvia created inconsistencies after the official agrarian reform had started; conflicts between 'old' and 'new' landowners were not unusual, for instance (Aistara 2018; Krūmiņš 2009; Eglitis 2002). Daina Eglitis writes that the situation signalled the confusion and 'clash of priorities' that occurred amid the ongoing social, political and

economic changes as the Soviet Union collapsed. While the new government wanted to reinstate the institution of individual farming with the initiative of Breša zemnieki, allowing willing farmers to work on the land and take care of it, the act of undoing historical injustice and returning the land to its rightful pre-war owners was also considered desirable (2002: 180).

Once more the 'correct' mapping and accurate measuring of land became a source of new conflicts between organic farmers and the state institutions responsible for allocating EU aid to organic farmers after 2004 when Latvia became part of the European Union. Aistara (2018) writes that those were times of 'land abstraction' (performed with GIS mapping) on several levels: the state, EU control mechanisms and EU financial support mechanisms. This was perceived by the 'old' organic farmers with the 'right motivation' as an attack on them and their hard work by the state and the EU. Furthermore, as they were mainly smallholders, they felt that it was also a demonstration of power by governing bodies unwilling to support small, hard-working organic farmers taking care of Latvian land and thus the country's sustainable future (Aistara 2018: 140).

The return to the small-scale agrarian path after independence has been critiqued by both researchers and agrarian political commentators, mostly by alluding to the 'blind' political reasoning that wants to return to the past. Indeed, even the 'past' to which politicians intermittently express the desire to return has been contested and analysed in a new critical light by historians and social scientists (Stranga 2017; Schwartz 2006, Tīsenkopfs 1999). In the so-called 'golden age' of agriculture that was installed and supported by Kārlis Ulmanis' authoritarian regime before WWII, small-holders in a strictly economic sense were rather drainers of national resources than an 'engine of national growth', largely due to the new homesteaders' lack of experience and the questionable fertility of distributed lands (in some cases). Then, shortly before the war, the land was systematically abandoned due to a shortage of labour and an ageing rural population (Stranga 2017: 78; Schwartz, 2007: 52). In 1937, due to agrarian reform, 16% of Latvian farms were under 1ha in size; as every small farm needed workers, such a significant

number of them was deemed to be a rather inefficient use of the rural labour force available (Stranga 2017: 75).

In some accounts, the small-farm system, based on the sentiments of 'a nation of peasants' and viensēta labourers, has been viewed as a short-term phenomenon (Swain 2003), and it has been noted that for the model to be sustainable and efficient, a great deal of state protectionism would be needed (Alanen 1995). In practice, even though, from the state's point of view, smallholderism reinstated the 'nostalgic' independence and prosperity of the first independent republic, it did not receive the same amount of support as it had during the interwar period (Plakans 1995, 2006; Aizsilnieks 1968). Soon after the small farmers started to re-establish their estates, they also met with an unsupportive attitude from the state. They were seen as a constraint in the rapidly accelerating way of liberalisation of agriculture (Aistara 2018: 38).

A less popular viewpoint that is overlooked in the mainstream critical discourse of 'small-farm return' is one that sees the changes that took place not just as a road to the abyss and a representation of clashing affect-driven political choices. Some authors suggest that a turn or return to the smallholder model contributed to some extent to organic or at least 'more natural' choices in farming. Setting up a profitable conventional farm amidst the change of regimes required significant investments that were rarely available to the small farms (Jung, Klein, and Caldwell 2014; Diena, Nr.105 [28.05.1993] n.d.). However, small farmers who were both the wanted and unwanted outcome of the historical changes and were left without state support due to market liberalization (Aistara 2018: 22), continued working on their land. On the one hand, they laboured as expected of them according to the popular discourse of a 'nation of peasants'; on the other, they retreated to the intimacies of their caring environments, balancing between the imaginaries and practice of newly (re)discovered organic farming and the structural and political changes (ibid: 22-23).

In 2016 when I was conducting most of my interviews with farmers the average size of a farm in Latvia was 43.3ha, while the average size of small farms was 22.9ha and the total share of small farms was 85.1%. Small farms and

forestry have been the principal employers in rural areas since the re-establishing of independence.[19]

The average size of organic farms varied from 10 to 40ha, comprising around 46% of all organic farms. Around 20% of all organic farms were 10 to 20ha[20].

The share of organic farming areas in the total utilised agricultural area was 13.4%. The most significant share of this organic farming land (25.8% excluding pastures and grasslands) was given over to fruit trees and berry bushes, including strawberries.[21]

In the terms of total crop production organic fruits and berries, including strawberries, comprised the second biggest share, 18.1% in 2016, while the first position was taken by honey, making up 30.3% of total production. Dairy stood third with 10% of total production. The most common crop among the producers of TP – all kinds of vegetables – comprised around 1% of the total organic crop.[22]

Out of the eight farms participating in this research project, seven were working with diverse crops and produce, except the goat farm owned by Valts and Daina. Nevertheless, almost all the farms had a focus on a single crop or type of produce. Thus, Kalnmeži and Lejas were mainly strawberry farmers. Kalnmeži with 6ha of agricultural land (out of 32h plus forest) was also under organic vegetable production, and Lejas (6ha) produced around 120 different medicinal and pot herbs.

[19] Lauku attīstības programma 2014.2020. https://www.zm.gov.lv/public/files/CMS_Static_Page_Doc/00/00/01/19/86/Programme_2014LV06RDNP001_5_1_lv.pdf

[20] Lauku saimniecību struktūra Latvijā 2016. gadā https://www.csb.gov.lv/sites/default/files/publication/2018-03/Nr%2018%20Lauku%20saimniecibu%20struktura%20Latvija%202016%20gada%20%2818_00%29%20LV_EN.pdf Last accessed 14.02.2019

[21] https://www.csb.gov.lv/sites/default/files/publication/2018-07/Nr_17_Latvijas_Lauksaimnieciba_2018_%2818_00%29_LV_EN_0.pdf

[22] https://www.zm.gov.lv/public/files/CMS_Static_Page_Doc/00/00/00/83/96/BIOlidz2017.pdf

Mārtiņš' (3ha agricultural land; 7.5h with forest) and Inta's farm (22ha of agricultural land; 120ha with forest) specialized in herbal teas and medicinal and pot herbs, while Ziediņi farm main business was poultry but they also worked with organic raspberries that were sold to the local fruit processing company.

Gatis and Aina's farm was one of the leading organic cereal producers in Latvia with 212ha of agricultural land, placing it among the 222 big agricultural farms in Latvia in 2016. Of the two farms where I spent the most extended periods of my research, Ieva and Jurģis from the Kalniņi farm were leaders in the production of organic microgreens and the Saulīši farm, which produced organic honey and bee products, also carried a flock of sheep (the Kalniņi and Saulīši farms are discussed in detail in Chapter Eight).

Organic farming in Latvia and the world

The periods of the advancement of organic farming in Latvia, as in the majority of post-socialist and post-Soviet spaces, cannot easily be compared with the trends in the broader development of organic farming around the world, particularly in the Global North.

There is almost no reliable data on any activities likely to lead to mainstream organic farming policies in Latvia in the interwar period, a time when the first organic farming developments were being initiated in German and English-speaking locations (Barton 2018; Lockeretz 2007).

In his recent book, historian Gregory Barton (2018) offers a comprehensive overview of the circumstances and historical events that contributed to the first initiatives in organic farming in the world generally. Early studies of soil, the global conservation movement and rural romanticism, as well as an interest in the traditional farming techniques of the Far East, all contributed to the formation of ideas leading to an increase in less industrialised farming epistemologies and practices (Barton 2018; Lockeretz 2007). Another critical reason favouring a 'return' to 'simpler rural life' was Europe's recent horrifying and exhausting experiences during the highly mechanised course of WWI (Barton 2018: 4).

Ultimately, however, despite the relevance of all the above circumstances to the newly established nation-states of 'Eastern Europe' – especially as many were created as a direct outcome of the war – they had an only secondary influence (if any) on the development of agrarian politics and the resulting ideologies and practices in these states. In the 1920s the first goal in newly established Latvia was the allocation of land and the creation of an 'agrarian class', as mentioned above, although European influence, particularly from Scandinavia, Germany and Switzerland, was affecting the country's food consumption practices.

While still a long way from the understandings of *ethical consumerism*, the trope of healthy food prepared by women for their families was already widespread in the popular discourse of housewives, as may be seen in Latvian media coverage from the 1920s and 1930s (e.g., Švīkule, 1928: 13; Sievietes Pasaule, no. 3, 1937: 30). Trends in consumer behaviour were also directly or indirectly affected by the food scarcity after WWI and its increasingly poor quality due to the unbalanced use of pesticides and mineral fertilisers that led to soil degradation (Vogt 2007: 11).

The circumstances that influenced the formation of organic farming movements, as well as health-conscious and vegetarian consumerism trends, have the same source and meet on the ideological level at two points at least: return to the land and organically grown healthy food. Yet, as Vogt points out, at that time organic farming practitioners and consumers did not join forces (2007: 13).

With the second significant onset of organic agriculture around the world 1970s and 1980s, its principal adherents, according to Lockeretz, were well-established farmers practicing conventional methods who were inspired by the examples of organic farming, and prominent agricultural scientists who had been researching intensive farming methods and had decided to turn away from them (2007: 6).

The first noticeable rise in organic awareness and the organic movement in Latvia began after regaining independence in the 1990s. As with the adherents in the Global North described by Lockeretz, people who took up organic farming were mainly from agrarian backgrounds, both practitioners and scientists; in other ways, however, the situation in Latvia was slightly different. In primarily

structural terms, the new followers and supporters of organic agriculture had recently adjusted from state to private property rights to the land; meanwhile, on the ideological and symbolic level, choosing organic farming practices was rooted in the wish to 'purify' Latvian land and soil from the damage caused by intensive and soil-degrading farming practices throughout the Soviet period (Aistara 2018: 89; Schwartz 2006). Thirdly, on both economic and ideological levels, the strong effects of agrarian nationalism that regained its influence with Latvian independence reinstated the small farm as a symbol of 'true' Latvian peasantry as masters on their own land. Finally, researchers and experts have argued that organic farming, which demands lower initial investment and resources, was the only mode of survival for small farmers who had decided to redeem their family farms and bring back 'traditional' ways of life based in labour on the land (Aistara 2018: 93; Šūmane 2011: 120). Such 'organicity by default' is also widely observed in the organic projects of the Global South (Aistara 2018: 13).

As organic awareness and its group of adherents in Latvia grew, positioning and contextualisation in the global organic movements soon became a defining quality. Jānis Sietiņsons, a prominent figure in the organic developments in Latvia, points out that initially, this went in two equally strong directions. One of these was biodynamic agriculture, which was borrowed from Germany and implemented with the help of several German agroecological organisations including Demeter, which follows the agricultural principles laid down by Rudolf Steiner. Led by an agriculturist and scientist Imants Heinackis, this strand was prominent and active in the western part of Latvia, near Liepāja and Renda. The main ideas and practical principles of biodynamic farming are rooted in anthroposophy, a spiritual-scientific approach to knowledge, with biodynamic farmers applying cosmic and even mystical methods; neighbouring farmers often saw them as weird, and their practices were considered almost on a par with witchcraft (Aistara 2018: 15; Hānbergs 2009: 7; Būmane 1992).

A second strand followed more mainstream organic farming practices, known across the world, that stress methods such as scientifically approved crop rotation, fertilisers of organic origin and companion planting. This

became the more significant movement, generating the LBLA (Latvijas bioloģisko lauksaimnieku apvienība; Union of Latvian Organic Farmers) in 1995 (Aistara 2018: 15).

Most of the farmers participating in this study were at least partly familiar with or had worked according to, the principles of the biodynamic anthroposophical discourse, particularly in their early years of farming. The knowledge and skills obtained in the course of biodynamic activities in Latvia, even if they were not applied or have been superseded by new local and global influences, have remained essential moral and practical guides. Farmers think that it is significant to find a balance between the ethical/spiritual value of organic farming and sustaining themselves economically, symbolically and socially. At the same time, most are happy to follow the newest trends of so-called scientific organic farming.

In the next chapter, I link the historical underpinnings discussed in this chapter with the ideological and practical contexts of changes in food provisioning in Latvia that were ongoing during my fieldwork, including an ethnographic description of the birth of the movement itself.

Chapter 5

Local contexts of care through organic food

The historical narrative of the relationship between concepts such as nature, land, work and countryside must be viewed as having close connections with the development of organic food production and consumption in Latvia. This is particularly relevant to the case of the TP movement. As I noted in the previous chapter, this started with the regaining of independence and agrarian reform and is set in the greater framework of state agrarian politics. In this chapter, I continue to address the themes I introduced and discussed in the previous chapter, while altering the mode of interpretation by moving from a historical overview, and examination of the implications of more abstract concepts, to current local developments in organic food production and consumption. I do that by focusing on the description of supporting activities in the organic food scene in Latvia in the recent decade, such as countrywide educational and marketing campaigns. In doing so, I cast light on ethnographically grounded and non-generalising aspects of the continuity, ruptures and innovation that inform broader change in alternative food provisioning discourses and practices in Latvia.

Reconnecting small farmers and consumers

In her book about relationships between nature and nation after communism, Katharina Schwartz (2006) has a chapter that is named 'Occupation of beauty' (the name is in quotation marks in the original title of the chapter), in which she describes the events and impact of Soviet rule in Latvia. Schwartz critically lays out and discusses the 'attack' of Soviet ideology on pre-war Latvian state ideology that, as she points out, has blended with the public self-identification of the Latvian nation. The 'occupation of

beauty' in her work is seen as the occupation of a whole constellation of relationships between the ideals and praxis of land-work-nature. The three elements in this constellation are mutually inclusive and as I write in the previous chapter are best manifested in the concept of human-made nature. The beauty in this constellation is the care about and for land that is performed by the labourers of a viensēta (farmstead; more on the concept and its application in this work in Chapter Four) that obtains its 'perfection' in the entity of the viensēta itself. In opposition, the conquest and destruction of this beauty were performed through Soviet agrarian industrialism, which aimed to eliminate the importance of small-farm care for the land and, in consequence, the reproduction of national identity (Schwartz 2006: 54-57).

A bird's eye view of small-scale replication of the land-work-nature combination across the country produces what Schwartz (2006: 58) calls a 'mosaic of fields, meadows, forests, rivers, lakes and farmsteads'; 60% of Latvia's landscape before its annexation by the Soviet Union comprised agricultural land in just such a mosaic form. The big manor lands sat next to the small farms, patches and gardens of the recently established 'agrarian class'. The Soviet Union planned to override and unify this kind of mosaic beauty through large-scale drainage and mechanized cultivation projects.

This mosaic analogy became useful when reflecting on my observations of Latvian countryside as I conducted my fieldwork. Most of my trips to the rural territories and viensētas (single farmsteads), and also when commuting between the cities that were the central locations for the consumer branches of TP, were made by public transportation, mainly bus. Sometimes, relatively long trips of up to four or five hours provided my gaze with a continually moving perspective of the country throughout the seasons. On February 2016 I took a trip to Liepāja, a city in southwestern Latvia where one of the regional branches of TP was located. As the trip proceeded through small towns, villages and for the most part rural territories, the analogy that came to my mind was not so much mosaic but rather a patchwork. On the visible level of material representation, the patchwork reflected the combination of the lack of coherence and consistency displayed in the appearance of the living space in the countryside – whether

hideous box-like blocks dating from Soviet times or century-old private family houses. The majority of buildings looked poorly preserved and repaired, patch by patch, according to the limited money available to invest in sustaining them. Many were not even patched; people were living in structures that were deteriorating around them (Reid 2018). This ultimate exemplification of patchworking was, in turn, patchworked with the well maintained and tended farms, fields and gardens that interspersed vast territories of forests and great, long-standing oak trees in the middle of fields. It seemed as if patches of different historical understandings of care about land and nation were layered into the changing landscape outside the bus window.

The metaphors of patchwork and patchworking can be applied to understand how the reconnection (the definition and use of the concept reconnection are explained in Chapters One and Two) process between producers and consumers, country and city was carried out within the TP movement. For instance, in my research, it became clear that the countryside in which the organically certified food was grown by participants in the movement was a spatiotemporality that held a higher position in terms of the values of cleanliness and high-quality food. Simultaneously, the city that was manifested through the ideas and acts of consumers of TP considered itself more powerful when it came to knowledge about the nature of 'true' organic food. This superiority was displayed in the acknowledged necessity for, and acts of, educating people about organic food in Latvia, as I describe in this chapter. Thus, as Domingos, Sobral and West point out, notions about what is 'good food' can be associated both with the country and the city, bearing in mind that each spatiotemporality holds a different power over the other and these power relations are mutually intertwined (2014: 9-10).

The patchworked reconnection between country and city/producers and consumers happened simultaneously and interchangeably in the movement, on ideological, ethical and practical levels. On the ideological level, it blended with the popular discourse of a 'nation of peasants', and the effort directed at the continuation, repair and maintenance of the land-work-nation narrative was a big part of its caring activities. Simultaneously, participants in

the movement understood that this deeply embodied and emplaced sentiment should be sustained and channelled towards the future. The care felt for Latvian nature and land became paramount regarding raising healthier children and securing a healthy place to live for future generations. The reconnection to the sentiments of the imagined past was patchworked with the imagined future, while the country as a trope of reconnection with the nation's identity provided the potential for an interconnected rural-urban present and future.

On the ethical level, the central paradigms of everyday ethics of care among the participants of the movement came down to primary motivations and ideals. The different registers of the movement's so-called central values were organicity, friendship and volunteerism, jointly creating a patchwork of value perceptions and enactments that simultaneously remained both familiar and strange to the various actors taking part in the care acts. For instance, perceptions and enactments of friendship varied, patchworked together from knowledge and experience of understandings of trust and distrust. The embodied patterns of caring as performed during the Soviet Union era were mixed with the newly acquired knowledge of market economies as well as the remembrance of knowledge (often imagined and invented, see Chapter Four) inherited from the generations before the Soviet Union. Similarly, understandings and aspirations concerning the true organicity of the movement were also patchworked together. These ethical aspects of patchworked reconnection through motivations and ideals are addressed in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

The third level of patchworked reconnection was expressed most visibly through the movement's everyday enactment and care work. First, an enactment that enabled the formation of different entanglements of care was connected to the lack or fragmented nature of the infrastructure. For the movement to function successfully, two aspects of this scarcity impacted on whether care acts could be carried out smoothly to implement and secure the values of the movement: firstly, inadequate roads and their largely poor condition, interpreted as an expression of the state's lack of care for rural livelihoods (I analyse this aspect in detail in Chapter Nine); secondly, a shortage of organic processing facilities – the outcome of historical events and also recent

political and policy misdoings (Aistara 2018; Šūmane 2011; Krūmiņš 2009) – which creates specific limiting structural frameworks. A third aspect, not directly connected to infrastructural weakness, concerned the trials of small farmers when trying to form joint market schemes to realise the sale of their produce. Throughout the first 25 years of independence all attempts to establish smaller or bigger joint market initiatives – by forming co-ops, establishing an organic shop in the local town, instituting a joint export scheme or striking a profitable deal with retailers – shut down or failed (Šūmane 2011: 128).

Often local limiting structural frameworks and the inability to form joint market schemes worked within or simultaneously alongside global policy and market schemes. Thus, on one level, the forming of co-ops – for instance, in the dairy industry in the first decades of the independence – was contested due to prevailing distrust towards other fellow producers, as well as the resemblance of such co-ops to the kolkhozes (Aistara 2018: 168; Tīsenkopfs et al. 2010). On another level, small organic farmers on the margins of the European Union, struggling to operate in the face of a lack of infrastructure, were thrown into unequal competition against well-off Western competitors or large-scale home producers – with little chance of success (Aistara 2018; Gille 2016, 2009; Mincyte 2011; Dunn 2008, 2003). Participants in the TP movement, therefore, directed their efforts to patchworking together these barely present and disconnected manifestations of infrastructure, which were mutually affecting and shaping their everyday work. To overcome and go beyond these ruptures so that the movement could continue, they aimed to create a joint distribution scheme: balancing between inner exclusion/inclusion against the backdrop of global exclusion and elimination schemes or securing the flows of produce through adaptation to the fragmented and deteriorating road infrastructure.

Another example of patchworking on the practical level appeared in the discussions and practical acts aiming to augment the organicity of the movement. During my fieldwork, it became clear that the 'leaders' of the movement encouraged one specific discourse of what this meant: to them, it was certified organicity. Throughout this dissertation, I describe certification as a means of mending and exclusion performed within the ideological and

structural shortages that the movement was experiencing at that time. For instance, one of the most significant structural shortages that affected the implementation of the chosen path to organicity became the necessary exclusion of small home producers, who were 'hostages' of the disconnected processing infrastructures (I address the 'road to organicity' and the problems of small home producers in the movement in Chapter Seven; see also Aistara 2018: 170).

In the following subsection, I describe the broader context and background for the patchworked reconnections that I mention above. I look at the broader context of the change in organic food perceptions and practices in Latvia by examining some aspects of the implementation of the two-year educational and marketing campaign, BioLoģiski (2014-2016).

Campaigning for the organic food in Latvia

In August 2014 a campaign entitled 'BioLoģiski! Tīra pārtika cilvēkam un videi' (BioLogical! Clean food for humans and the environment) was launched, lasting for two years until July 2016 and financed by the EU and Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Latvia. The implementation was entrusted to the LBLA (Latvijas Bioloģiskās lauksaimniecības asociācija). It was in its second implementation year during my fieldwork, allowing me to attend several educational seminars and have a series of meetings and conversations with critical actors responsible for the smooth and successful implementation of the campaign. One such person was Dace. Working in a communications agency, she was actively involved in the marketing activities of the campaign. In this section, I describe recurring conversations I had with Dace in which she explained the main reasons for and results of the campaign. I thicken the description with observations from several seminars that were held with the aim to educate the general public about the organic food issues raised by the campaign BioLoģiski. A closer look at the campaign from the perspective of one of its implementers, combined with observation of the interaction between the lecturers and general public during seminars, helps to provide a more general context for the ongoing move towards organic food

practices in Latvia while locating the activities of TP within this trend.

One of the main purposes of BioLoģiski was also to provide a direct response to, and simultaneously a manifestation of, the ongoing change. It aimed to tackle the poor education and awareness about organic food and certification on the part of consumers who, according to campaign implementers, were trapped in the spatiotemporality of post-Soviet perceptions. The uncritical and rarely challenged belief that self-grown food in the homeland's undoubtedly healthy soil is best for the reproduction of a healthy family, and consequently the nation, was a popular narrative in post-Soviet space for at least first two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Blumberg 2014; Caldwell 2011; Gabriel 2005).

In one of our conversations, Dace told me that in the course of her work, meeting different types of people across Latvia, she has observed that more and more have started to distinguish between food merely 'from the countryside' and organic food. Previously, popular perceptions about the former that were formed after regaining independence were often that it automatically equalled natural, healthy, good produce. 'These perceptions are starting to change now', Dace says. She admits that people have started approaching food from the countryside more critically, asking questions, as exemplified by TP. The transformation demonstrates that a transition from a post-Soviet state of beliefs and attitudes is taking place.

Another objective of the campaign was to break out of the so-called 'organic bubble' to reach people that already know about organic food either from a farmers or consumers perspective. These are mainly educated, better-situated people of active reproductive age who regularly purchase their food in the big supermarkets. The objective was to reach a stage where at least part of the contents of their shopping cart would be the result of organic choice.

A third objective of raising the awareness levels for organic food was thus to increase the sales and expansion of the organic food market in Latvia. In one of our conversations, Dace said that the then-current campaign was an attempt to compensate the producers for a similar campaign that did not succeed in 2005, straight after accession in the EU. Back then farmers were left somewhat disappointed, and

their market situation did not improve as had been promised. Due to the inadequate implementation of the previous marketing strategy, and poor handling of marketing activities, organic farmers remained disconnected from consumers, as there was no meaningful development of the organic market. To many farmers, marketing became a swearword and something they did not trust would bring them collaboration or real business opportunities. Aistara remarks, however, that the unsuccessful outcome of the campaign was also associated with the lack of diversity and quantity of marketable produce (2018: 164). Thus, according to Dace, BioLoģiski served as a continuation of the long-term work of (re)-gaining the trust of the farmers in state institutions. The fact that the practical task of carrying out the campaign was entrusted to the LBLA was apparently convincing enough for farmers to think it was worth trying again. Meanwhile, by improving the organic produce market situation at a meta-level, the BioLoģiski campaign was also intended to reconnect farmers with consumers.

Practically BioLoģiski consisted of several parallel activities. An educational internet platform was created that was regularly topped up with new information. It contained articles on recent research both globally and in Latvia, lists of practical suggestions, the contact details of organic farmers and much more educational and informative material that substantially contributed to the campaign's aims. Another critical part of the campaign was a series of educational seminars that were held across Latvia in the two years the campaign operated. During my fieldwork, I attended three of these and, in the following, I provide ethnographic descriptions of the main incidents and discussions that arose.

The first educational seminar I attended, in March 2016, was held in the Māmiņu klubs (Mummy's Club) in Riga, an organisation that was founded in the mid-2000s as an educational and support entity for mothers. Today the club has grown into a leading, countrywide, multiservice enterprise that manages and provides all kind of services, mainly for mothers, concerned with childbirth and upbringing, as well as self-care for mothers. On its homepage, the club represents itself as entirely mother/women-oriented. The family and fathers are rarely mentioned and then only in passing. Thus, it was no wonder

that the seminar was attended mainly by mothers with babies or women who were expecting, apart from me as the observer: seven women altogether, with three women as lecturers.

The structure of this and the following seminars I attended was built around two to three educational lectures/presentations that are tailored to each corresponding audience. Each workshop opened with a general presentation by some leading person in the campaign on its purpose and the nature of the organic food it advocates. This time Dace – my informant and one of the primary implementors of the campaign – opened the seminar. Her posture and tone of voice throughout the presentation was convincing, indeed, almost evangelising. It was apparent that she fully believed the message that she was delivering, that of tackling those aspects of health that are part of a cyclical movement from the soil, through plants and animals, to humans and a healthy planet, and back to the soil again. Every time the organic concept was mentioned, Dace's voice warmed. Her tone of voice and approach gave the impression that living in a healthy world order of organic food is almost like living in a fairy tale – as good and as happy. Yet her presentation was not only a fairy tale. She admitted that as of 2016 there was not one profound scientific study showing that eating organic is 100% better for our health than eating conventional food. Nevertheless, her alliances were clear; she stood for organic. Thus, there was no doubt that she was convinced that organic is better.

Another presenter was an activist and a blogger mother, who shared her own experience of consuming organic food. In her testimonial-style presentation, she described to attendees what it takes to decide on and start acting towards organic choices. The blogger did it in an approachable style, providing tips and tricks on how to save money by eating organic, and what has worked in her own experience.

After these two presentations, the floor was given over to questions and answers. In this part, another lecturer – a chemist and active supporter of the organic food systems in Latvia, Ilze – joined the improvised expert panel. The main discussion between presenters and audience developed around certification and the necessity of certification. Most of the seminar attendants were somehow unconvinced

about the legitimate and mainly practical use of certification. Some hold to the popular discourse that certification does not prove anything, as people in the Latvian countryside are already producing clean if unofficially (i.e. without certification) organic food. Further, it was agreed by seminar attendants that, at the end of the day, it is all about mutual trust between food producer and consumer. This part of the discussion highlighted the possibility of change in the making. As I indicated at the start of this section, Dace was hopeful about consumers' willingness to change their perceptions. She also pointed out that often all that was needed for this was a discussion in which people could openly share their concerns, as happened in this seminar.

Nevertheless, it was also apparent that the discussion was guided with the aim of directing the minds of the audience towards the incorporation of new, more universal and standardised perceptions of organicity into their worldviews. Accordingly, throughout the discussion, all the lecturers stressed the importance of education, self-awareness and personal responsibility when choosing organic produce. Most importantly, it was also pointed out that a conscious decision to choose organic might take a certain amount of effort, especially in terms of a substantial change in everyday habits of food provisioning.

The second educational seminar, in March 2016, was held in a wooden housing district that contains one of the regular, urban-elitist food markets that is well known among foodies and both organic and healthy food adherents. It was not surprising that the audience that attended the event seemed much more informed, but seemingly also less interested in engaging in discussion, than that at the Māmiņu klubs, although, similarly, also overwhelmingly female, except for two men. One was a hipster type, probably a local inhabitant, and the other an elderly gentleman who later turned out to be the father of a well-known foodie.

The choice of lecturers also made a point. The first official lecture this time was given by an active ambassador and CEO of one of the biggest organic potato producers in Latvia, Jānis. Two other presenters were a celebrity blogger and foodie (female) and a celebrity chef and initiator of the slow food movement in Latvia, Mārtiņš Rītiņš (male). This

seminar even had a facilitator, a well-known news anchor in state television, which was not usual in other seminars I have attended. As I later discovered, the news facilitator was himself an active participant in TP, which explained his role in the seminar.

The same PowerPoint template that Dace used in the Māmiņu klubs was used in the first presentation. This time, however, the principal message concerned healthy soil, a slightly different approach than that used by Dace, who paid the greatest attention to the health aspects of the whole organic cycle. Jānis, as a representative of a big company, accented the aspects of productivity in organic farming that are directly related to the quality of the soil. His main concluding point was that healthier soil leads to higher and better yields that are easily competitive with those in conventional farming. Like Dace, Jānis also took a slightly evangelising tone aimed at convincing all those present that organic farming is better, cleaner (I discuss the importance of soil care in greater detail in Chapter Eight).

In this seminar, the discussion part, which was less lively than in Māmiņu klubs, rambled around the themes of organicity and certification. The blogger and foodie presenter pointed out that certification is only a part of establishing authenticity; personal relations are also vital if the producers and consumers want to create a long-lasting relationship. This discussion overlaps with those that I regularly encountered in the work of TP on one of its self-proclaimed central values – friendship – which, according to the leaders of the movement, was also a key to implementing two other values, organicism and volunteerism (more in Chapter Seven).

I was invited both by Zita and Dace to the final seminar in May 2016 that I attended during the campaign and in the second part of my fieldwork (it was also one of the last seminars of the campaign). We had grown to know each other throughout repeated meetings and encounters, and our relationships had become something that could be called 'friendship', in line with TP values (more about TP values in Chapter Seven).

This meeting was held in Talsi, some 125km outside of Riga, and was one of several regional meetings, which were often also attended by organic producers. This time, in an unusual coincidence, all the attendees (two women and one

man) of the seminar, except us (four people) were local farmers. Later, the meeting was joined by a local permaculture activist who happened to be also a fellow researcher on organic and alternative farming practice in Latvia. Attendees were told that these meetings are usually intended more for consumers, but the organisers highly value the producers' presence and their input is something to look forward to.

The first presentation was delivered by Gunta, an active local farmer and well-known activist in the greater organic movement in Latvia. She mainly spoke from the perspective of farmers' concerns, offering suggestions on how to avoid or attend to a range of difficult situations that organic farmers are facing. For example, she stressed that no one is going to report on dishonourable practices; farmers needed to react and inform themselves. The overall atmosphere in this seminar was similar to the others; the organic way was seen as the only right choice. If any questions or uncertainties were raised by the farmers, they were 'levelled out' by reassuring advice and suggestions from the lecturers.

One of the attending farmers was a beekeeper who had not yet decided to go for the organic certification. She expressed her concerns regarding the popular discourse among organic production adherents about the dangers of 'evil rapeseed' (Brassica napus). Her narrative synchronises with the one I also heard at the Saulīši farm (one of the farms of my stay, described in Chapter Eight). Organic beekeepers are becoming increasingly entrapped within the vast areas of conventional monocultural farming, prominent among which is conventional rapeseed. To secure the organic quality of the honey, beekeepers are compelled to move their beehives to areas where there are no conventional rapeseed fields in the vicinity; it has thus become a crop that is regarded as evil in terms of an organic way of living, and a symbol of conventional farming in the eyes of organic beekeepers.

As the conversations in the seminar evolved, the issue of *lielais dānis* (Big Dane) – another defining term of contemporary perceptions about Latvian countryside or rural areas (see Chapter Four) – was mentioned. In her research on the mobility from and within the rural spaces in Latvia, anthropologist Dzenovska also addresses this

issue. Her research shows that from the perspective of Danes, who have indeed obtained substantial amounts of land in Latvia mainly for hog farming, the reaction of Latvian peasants is seen as full of malign prejudices against the *outsiders*' farming practices. Dzenovska suggests, however, that, according to her inquiries, the lielais dānis could instead be seen as a metaphor or symbol that for Latvian farmers embodies the hardships of inequalities they have experienced since exposure to the market economy after independence (2011: 5–6).

Following the popular discourse, farmers in the seminar agreed that lielais dānis represents a foreign landowner and/or prominent farmer who can afford to do things that are out of reach for a local farmer. Big, conventional, foreign-owned farms were preferred and supported by the ministry of agriculture but did not necessarily fit well with local perceptions about good farming practices. Dace also confirmed the persistent lobbying of big conventional farmers, critically observing that the Ministry of Agriculture puts on a mask of support for organic farming mainly in communications with media or foreign stakeholders. In reality, it generally chooses to stand on the side of big industrial farmers, as they are seen as bringing fast, visible profit to the state.

On the other hand, the seminar attendees admitted that there is also a bright side to the presence of lielais dānis in the Latvian countryside. Gunta told us that she had once reported on a conventional Danish farmer in her neighbourhood, which was not as hard as it would be with a fellow Latvian. At the end of the day, the Dane is *svešais* (the stranger). It would be almost impossible to report on *savējais* (one's own) if one planned to stay and continue farming in a neighbourhood. So, this clear distinction between us and the other states clearly: 'Don't mess with your own'. Furthermore, relationships between neighbours in the countryside are viewed as a complex web of sociality and status. As an elderly farmer at the meeting, a lady in her 70s, told us, she never reported on a neighbour who sprayed fertilisers that spread almost two meters into her fields at the border between their farms, saying that she did not want to spoil neighbourly relations. 'Kaimiņš ir kaimiņš', she added (a neighbour is a neighbour). Thus, sometimes exposed and less protected farmers in the countryside choose good social relations and maintaining their good

neighbour status over the well-being of their farming practices and business.

Yet the discourse of lielais dānis feeds into the broader discourse that suggests that the overall involvement of society in what could be viewed as civic activism (in popular Western discourse) is low in Latvia, not only in terms of securing a healthy farming environment (more on civic activism in the form of volunteerism in Chapter Seven). Gunta and others agreed that unfortunately, the current situation is that if a violation is perpetrated by a conventional farmer, the ones who take responsibility and pay with the quality of their products and sometimes even with their certification are organic farmers. This is one reason why a more active and joint force reaction – proactivity – is of paramount importance for the organic farmers.

Another critical discussion in the seminar touched on terminology and its relation to overall awareness about organic food knowledge in Latvia, something that goes back to the purpose of the campaign to educate society. The attendees pondered on the meaning and perceptions of terms *eko* and *bio*. According to Latvian law, they both mean the same thing. However, several of lecturers as well as attending producers shared their experiences that people in Latvia are very poorly educated and informed about the terms and labels that distinguish a legally valid organic product (referring to the EU certification or a local certification issued by LBLA) from one that is called organic but does not have moral or legal rights to be thus labelled. Thus, according to the law, it is forbidden to call produce *eko* or *bio* if it doesn't have one of these certifications (though in practice they go together) marked on the produce with a label. The poor levels of knowledge about demarcations between what should and should not be called and labelled organic were also addressed by Gunta, who claimed that even the Minister of Health does not understand the difference. Another example provided by a seminar attendee was that an official from the LBLA itself had been arguing in e-mail correspondence that eko and bio are not the same.

The confusion of terms and the abundance of different kinds of labels developed and applied during the first two decades of the (again) independent state has been

significant. Not in vain, the BioLoģiski campaign set out with an intention to start making things more transparent, to start making people aware, more knowledgeable and able to navigate the muddled labyrinths of names and labels. The campaign intended to wipe out the patchwork structures of labels and markers of recognition that have been accumulating in perceptions about healthy, good, clean produce in Latvia, replacing it with standardised harmony in the form of an EU certification that would designate *true* organic production. It would still be patchworking, but, in the form of EU certification schemes, the patchwork would be so big that it would give the impression that perceptions had started from a clean slate.

As the seminar continued, Gunta, as the more experienced organic farmer, encouraged two younger farmers, a male meat producer and female beekeeper, to consider applying for the certification and organic status. The elderly dairy producer who was at the seminar already had an organic status. Like Pauls and Inese at the Saulīši farm (see Chapter Eight), the meat farmer admitted that he does not find such an engagement binding even though his working methods are almost entirely organic already and, also like Saulīši, he has his well-established clientele. Yet the main reason why organic certification would be rather intrusive while not increasing business profit is a lack and underdevelopment of organic processing infrastructure in Latvia (see above in this chapter).

As one of the meeting's agendas was the reconnection of producers and consumers by inviting the former to join TP, Zita, the founder and 'leader' of the movement promised that despite the current situation of a dearth of organically certified slaughterhouses, TP is interested in negotiations with organic meat producers in Latvia. It would be ready to loosen terms and lower the threshold in return for their participation in the movement, demonstrating that leaders of the movement are ready to invest in the value of friendship while closing an eye to the formality of the organic by discarding the certification requirement in some cases (for more on values and what is called an 'organic transition', see Chapter Seven). On another level, the movement's investment in and care for its values and aims is shown by its making reconnection possible beyond the structural shortcomings and ruptures created by the

combined series of decisions on the level of state and EU policies.

Zita even made an announcement that the movement has been considering creating a certification of its own that would help to handle such out of the ordinary situations and make up for deficiencies in infrastructure. This is due, for example, to the problems of processing for meat producers and also the fact that many small home producers do not find obtaining the organic status appealing as their operating capital is quite small and it would not be financially beneficial for them to pay the regular fee.

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In the summer of 2016, after the two-year BioLoģiski campaign had finished, I met Dace again, and we talked about the results. What were her thoughts? Had the campaign succeeded? She admitted that, in general, the aim had probably been too vague and broad. They should have focused on a single goal, something more specific. At the time I was finishing my fieldwork, no official reports or summarization of the campaign were yet available, so Dace was merely sharing her observations and conclusions with me. Her view was that the farmers' trust had been partially regained. Yet, during the campaign, it became clear that the LBLA still did not have a clear vision nor a long-term strategy for expanding and strengthening the organic market. The aim of reaching supermarket consumers was also only partly achieved, according to Dace. Nevertheless, it seemed that the impact of the campaign had been felt in the retail sector itself. For instance, the big supermarkets had noticeably expanded their organic food aisles and shelves, although there was still a lot of work to do with the consumers.

As the campaign proceeded, Dace had learned the power of participatory and direct involvement activities. She told me about an experiment that was organised: a family corresponding to the target audience was invited to buy as much organic food as was possible for their family for one week. Dace saw that such experiments do have an effect and that the campaign perhaps needed more such proactive interventions. Yet it had not been possible for this

campaign, as the plan had already been approved. Even the smallest deviation had to be coordinated with LAD (Lauku atbalsta dienests – Rural Support Service of the Republic of Latvia), with the European Commission and 'probably even with Saint Peter himself'. Dace smiled ironically, showing her contempt for the bureaucratic side of any well-intended campaign where too many interested stakeholders are involved.

Dace admitted that even though the changes that were happening and had happened were noticeable on all levels – particularly those of the overall awareness and education of the general public and the rapidly changing market (e.g., the increase in aisle space and offers on organically sourced food in the supermarkets) – there was still plenty of work to do. She pointed out the strong prevailing difference between perceptions in Riga and other cities, and the countryside. In the latter, she had experienced that people do not see the organic as necessarily something good and desirable and, in some cases, the 'expansion' of the organic ideology is seen as an attack on well known, traditional local practices (see also the BioLoģiski seminar in Māmiņu klubs). Meanwhile, from the farmers' point of view, the problems with the lack of greater market strategies and systems supported and promoted by the state remained an issue that required a great effort from all involved stakeholders to remedy, Dace concluded.

Chapter 6

Recognition of routine care work

In this chapter, I continue some discussions started in previous chapters, which will carry through the rest of the work. Firstly, I focus on the gendered implications attached to the importance of *routine care work* in securing TP's everyday reproduction. To exemplify the issues involved, I analyse the activities of dishwashing and clearing away in everyday foodwork (a term that has been explained in Chapter Two) based on my own experiences as a participant-observer. Secondly, I turn to the spatial implications and temporal embeddedness of these tasks, which often contribute to their invisibility and lack of acknowledgement. Finally, I call for the recognition of these acts while trying to understand their positionality in broader care work discussions, mainly in feminist research.

The ultimate stronghold of routine care work

The first evening I arrived, in company with the whole Kalniņi family, at their farm, we entered the house, and almost immediately found ourselves in the kitchen. It was on the ground floor of the small house and shared space with the parlour, which qualified as something between a *viesistaba* (literally, guest room) or *lielā istaba* (literally, big room) as it is commonly called in Latvia. The kitchen felt cramped and stuffy and I noticed a pile of dishes in the sink. My first thought was that if the dishes were washed it would free up some space and the kitchen would look more spacious. I decided to take care of it after I had settled in, as I needed to set up my tent near the house before dark.

After organising myself, I returned to the kitchen and took care of the dishes;[23] yet, as days passed, I learned that the dishes were there to stay. Seemingly they appeared out of nowhere. The sink almost bent under their weight as they sat there, dirty and smelly, causing everyone who glanced to respond with lazy silence or dormant and growing discomfort. This silent reminder kept everyone who spent active everyday time in the kitchen on their feet. During my stay, that was usually the mother of the family, Ieva, and me. The presence of the continually accumulating piles of dishes and utensils did not allow one to unwind and feel relaxed. It felt like there was a recurring dynamic movement from chaos to order daily.

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Throughout my research with TP, I became increasingly interested in examining the less visible acts of care rather than those which were more eye-catching: acts that we usually take for granted or those that are deeply embedded in the intricacies of several interconnected acts and are, therefore, never prioritised or elevated into the category of care (Mol et al. 2010; Tronto 1993; DeVault 1991).

Foodwork and care acts are often so intertwined it is almost impossible to separate them and even harder to define them. In the Global North, both foodwork and care have been conducted in marginal, economically less valued and publicly invisible corners of social life, taking place mainly in the home and performed by women (Thelen 2015; Meah 2014; DeVault 1991). Because of this lowly, historically constructed positioning in the hierarchy of social interactions, the entanglements of foodwoork and care have been rarely studied in the Global North (see, for example, Lammer 2017; Jarosz 2011; Kneafsy et al. 2008), mostly remaining in the assigned margins of social research.

While it is hard to distinguish and analyse entangled foodwork and care acts individually, it is even less common and overly technical to highlight acts of everyday foodwork and elevate them to the level of analytically essential

[23] Such *taking over* the task was not specifically negotiated in any the houses of my stay. It was an unspoken mutual agreement that was made during stepping in and acting. I talk more about my role in dishwashing in the last section of this chapter.

concepts. In my work, however, I suggest that one such act that I observed and enacted myself was the everyday cleaning work in the kitchen, mainly dishwashing. It is not a coincidence, therefore, that I chose to examine this field of activity more closely. While I did not decide to focus on these acts only because of their seemingly obvious placement in the category of undervalued everyday care work nevertheless one important reason approaching them was to draw and interpret the bigger picture of the movement's cosmology of value(s) and practice.

Another reason I chose to look at clearing up and dishwashing in greater detail are to do with my field observations and hands-on participation in these activities, which can be defined by two critical traits. Firstly, they are temporally sandwiched between acts of care and, secondly, they are the quintessence of what could be conceptualised as routine care work. The trait of temporal 'betweenness' explains the problems with carving out the acts as separate, and also their invisibility, although the latter is a characteristic common to most of the care work performed in domestic or kin-occupied settings. Among the more visible and accountable activities, such as purchasing, cooking and eating food – the consumption section of the whole cycle that I call foodwork in this study – there are always temporally in-between, less visible, linking activities, such as cleaning, washing up and planning (a set of activities characterised by the high-intensity mental load involved).

The second trait vital to routine care work is its ultimate necessity and the responsibility that it entails; although it often tends to be tiring and boring, it is essential to guarantee a well-functioning, regular and substantial backdrop for all the other activities that follow in the greater social organisation that is build up by routine care work. Unsurprisingly, feminist research has shown that, historically, the exhausting routine work that needs to be done to get other things going is the province of the less powerful members of close social groups, which means – in the Global North where such groups are mainly nuclear families – women (Wajcman 2014; DeVault 1994).

I suspect that my positionality as a woman meant that clearing up in the kitchen and dishwashing became, in some ways, my defining activity almost immediately on my

arrival at each fieldsite. Certainly, it was apparent that the task was considered 'unimportant' by my field participants, so it made sense that the newcomer to the house should take it on to prove herself worthy. Nonetheless, it had strategic importance and, as I saw it, it represented the ultimate enactment of care for the family and house, one that ensured the smooth flow of the rest of the foodwork. Thus, while outwardly devalued, it held a hidden value paramount in the food provisioning practices of a family. When I did not perform the task, it was usually carried out by women, most often the mothers of the family, with some elements, like unstacking the dishwasher or drying up, performed by her children or husband. Thus, I saw this stage of the care in foodwork as one of the last remaining 'strongholds' of *invisible care work* among my field participants.

In the following sections, I look more closely at conceptualisations of invisible care work in the scientific literature, comparing these discussions with my ethnographic material and suggesting alterations in how invisible care work might be formulated academically. The variations I observed that prompted such alterations were paramount in my fieldwork – so much so that I came to refer to the range of activities as *care not-work*. Consequently, the discussion that follows outlines a definition of care not-work. Simultaneously I interweave this conceptualisation with the problematics raised in previous scholarly discussions of the gendered positionality of such activities and those exhibited in the households of my research participants.

Foodwork's caring routines are also embodied, a compilation of corporeal experiences and accumulated skills that are obtained through the repetitive and rhythmical enactment of care acts (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Kortright 2013; Sutton 2001, 2011). I address the crucial relationships between body and materialities, as well as the embodied meaning of skills in mastering care acts later in this chapter as well as in Chapter Eight, where I talk about care in production.

Care not-work

Invisible care work falls into the big conceptual domain of invisible work, a term coined by feminist research, which, in the framework of the capitalist mode of production is not considered labour as it is unpaid (for a discussion of the distinction between work and labour in this study see in Chapter Two).

In the debates of the 1970s and 1980s, such work was deemed to have no 'social'[24] value as it is performed in private, domestic spaces, is not abstracted and is not visible in public or social domains (Strathern referring to Smith [1978] 1988: 153). In capitalist discourse, such work is regarded as unproductive and labelled nonwork (Hardt and Negri 1994: 7-8 referencing Marx). Wajcman calls such work *not-work*, by which he is mainly referring to household activities (2015: 114). I have applied Wajcman's term in my research as I find it useful when describing the care acts in the foodwork among the participants in TP.

The term care not-work is created by joining and adjusting two concepts: care work, which is widely applied in feminist research to work that is invisible and performed by less privileged members of society, mainly women. And not-work, a term coined in the field of housework research (Wajcman 2015), that applies to activities which are mainly performed at home, are not remunerated and have their own temporalities that vary from the abstract labour time that is sold for money outside of the home. However, in my research I add the dimension of care to the notion of not-work, thereby challenging the strict distinction between home and outside-of-home spaces, showing that care as a relational activity (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Jarosz 2011; Tronto 1993) bridges as well as juxtaposes hegemonically employed spatiotemporal binaries, such as domestic or private/public, and abstract linear labour time vs. multileveled, fragmented not-work time.

I regard most of the care work performed in provisioning practices among TP practitioners as not-work. Very often it is barely visible or audible, and it is not recognised and acknowledged as work; it is voluntary work, or it is everyday

[24] Strathern here refers to the Marxist term of 'social' as an abstract value, for instance, 'the socially necessary labour time inherent in the commodity' (see Strathern 1988: 153).

routine work. Most importantly, none of the not-work performed by consumers is remunerated. Objectively, these aspects – not being valued monetarily, the invisibility and the bleakness of routine – add a note of unwilling obligation and inescapable responsibility to the ethics and practice of care in such not-work. Consequently, throughout this chapter and, indeed, the whole thesis, I explore the following questions: how are the seemingly tedious realities of care not-work viewed by participants in my research and the food movement? How do they rationalise the care work? What is the disposition of gendered division in the care not-work?

Although recent research in the Global North (mainly in the USA and UK) continues to show that 66% of housework and care work (both paid and unpaid) is still performed by women (Wajcman 2015: 117), I critically contextualise my ethnographic material within these findings, as I look at the care not-work in TP as a relational activity. Furthermore, I do not restrict my analysis only to the foodwork performed in the homes of my participants but examine the movement's whole cycle of food provisioning.

The research and analysis in this study demonstrate that the relationships between gender, food, care and work are rather contextual and situational. Rich ethnographic material from across the world, however, shows that women throughout history and in different cultures have had a special relationship with food and feeding and thus caring through the medium of food. Caring for the family in this way has been linked, symbolically and practically, to the reproduction of the family, to kin (Sahlins 2011; Sutton 2001; DeVault 1991; Carsten 1997; Weismantel 1995). Both on the ideological and very embodied level, the idea and practice of kin and family through care performed via food are reproduced through complicated systems and symbolic enactments of provisioning and feeding practices. Across cultures, women have actively facilitated the ideological and embodied reproduction of kin and family regardless of social, political and economic changes locally and globally.

In the Global North, changes in motherhood and thus motherly caretaking are linked to the industrial revolution, a time when housework became actively linked to care for the family, and housework and foodwork became

expressions of affection, of emotional care (Wajcman 2015: 115). DeVault also writes about the creation of the 'nurturing' family that accompanied the transformation, wherein women were supposed to look after the family and its affairs in the home, creating a caring and affective environment for family reproduction (DeVault 1991: 15). However, both authors stress that it should not be forgotten that this 'ideal' family model was characteristic of middle-class, mainly white families across the industrialised West. Meanwhile, working-class, non-white and other less privileged groups had to rely on different social and economic arrangements in the division of house and foodwork in their everyday lives (Wajcman 2015; DeVault 1991).

The 'ideal family' model, that would be preferably middle class, consisting of two heterosexual parents and one or more children, did not exist among most of my field participants – neither producers nor consumers. I learned through conversation and observation while participating in the work shifts that, apart from nuclear family groups, many families comprised a mother, a granny and a single child (a very common family form in Latvia today, see Putniņa and Zīverte 2008). There were also single-parent families, young couples without children, LGTB couples as well as one-person households. All these families came from rather diverse social and economic backgrounds, as I have explained in Chapter Three.

With that I do not claim that the movement's participants are somehow less privileged, yet nor can they be characterised as belonging to the elite, or even the middle class, as the question of class division is still profoundly challenged in what is addressed in the literature as post-socialist spaces (Ost 2015) – which are also home to TP. Nevertheless, modernist notions of familyhood, motherhood and nurturing were present and enacted on an everyday basis among the majority of families participating in this study. DeVault writes that in the idealised modernist family setting women are drawn into doing the work of 'mothers' and 'wives', thus participating in the everyday work of family production in close interaction with other family members (DeVault 1991: 13). Moreover, in the case of the movement, they also interact with other participant families, producers and consumers.

The acts of care not-work in TP were performed both by women and men; however, as noted above, historically women have had ownership over most of this type of activity and have thus possessed the power to decide if, when and how the items created in these care acts are circulated or exchanged. Thus, returning to the definition of care (see Chapter Two for a definition of care by Fisher and Tronto [1991]), the acts of giving performed care not-work can be interpreted as a means of maintaining, continuing and repairing the world or spatiotemporality that is inhabited by the families of the TP movement.

In the following section, I address the changing and adapting relationality between spatial and temporal aspects of everyday foodwork, looking more closely at kitchen spatiotemporalities that can be restricting and revealing at the same time.

Extending and balancing the kitchen spatiotemporality

The spatiotemporalities of the kitchen emerged as a significant factor affecting the everyday organisation and carrying out of the routine care work, such as washing up and cleaning, activities that are the focus of this chapter. I show that the interaction between space, time and routine care activities are significant building blocks in constructing and deconstructing everyday lives in the kitchen. Furthermore, the kitchen's 'capability' to accumulate and process the materialities (appliances and food) within these spatiotemporalities, as well as a set of various routine care acts, also contribute to the 'totality of life' or the idea about life in the kitchen ('home' in Douglas's discussion [1991: 296]).

The kitchen is a space within the space. According to Mary Douglas, the home – and I extend this understanding to the kitchen with all its transforming materialities (in the form of food and appliances) – could be viewed as a space that is not fixed; like the home, the kitchen also "starts by bringing some space under some control" (ibid.) through the care acts that I discuss in this chapter. Simultaneously, because the space of the home – and, in light of my research, the kitchen likewise – is adjustable and changes, it is also

connected to 'structures in time'. It is hard to distinguish and label the temporal occurrences of these everyday kitchen care acts as they are not fixed and defined; thus, my observation leads me to agree with Wajcman who suggests looking at domestic time(s) as 'fluid' and 'open-ended', which, similar to care work, is hard to quantify, measure and standardise (2015: 128).

Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) invites us to view care time as *messy time*. This understanding very effectively describes the care processes at every stage and level of TP, as I demonstrate throughout the study. Such *messy time,* according to Puig de la Bellacasa, is time organised beyond the productivist and progress models and, for that reason, often marginalised and overlooked. Messy care time – without beginning or end and clear demarcations – is much more about maintenance, continuity and reorganisation than simple production and accumulative progress (2017: 177).

Philosopher Suzanne Langer (1977; 1957) has suggested that artworks are not mere copies of reality but rather virtual spatiotemporalities with their own spatial dimensions, temporalities and rhythms. Mary Douglas, drawing on Langer's work, proposed seeing the home – which I extrapolate, in this case, to the kitchen – 'as an organization of space over time', extending Langer's understanding about art to the spatiotemporalities of the home. Like musical rhythms, homes (kitchens) as living realities adjust their inners rhythms to those outside (1991: 289-294). This is exemplified by changes in ideas about the nature of the kitchen and how the foodwork in it should be organised. Time becomes an embodied, social and historical experience that we live not just as a mere abstract category and perception (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 176). The care acts in such adjusting and changing spatiotemporalities are, on the one hand, what keep the ideas of homes and kitchen running; on the other, as the following ethnographic descriptions demonstrate, perceptions and enactments of care are changing along with the spatiotemporalities of the kitchens.

In the context of the feminist discussion, Angela Meah in her recent article on the kitchen as space and place alludes to the importance of seeing the kitchen as a space/place that is not restricted only to foodwork and gendered

'oppression'. Instead, she invites us to see the kitchen as a 'space for living', to extend the borders of the kitchen, both in ideological and practice-based terms (Meah 2016: 42). This insight resonates with my findings that kitchens are changing and adjusting spatiotemporalities, formed and maintained through responding to the inner (intimate household dynamics and power relations) and outer (popular discourses, perceptions, adult working conditions, and a newcomer in the family – a live-in anthropologist) rhythms of kitchen space organisation. Kitchens became the living entanglements of care acts in multiple mutualities between care actors and materialities. Within these care entanglements, household members of the three leading participant families met and performed various activities that contributed to the daily socialisation or unspoken and invisible (re)production of family/kin and its organisation. Thus, for instance, in the Ozoli (consumer) family, the gendered balance of foodwork and its implications in forming the situational spatiotemporalities of care was affected by the working conditions of both parents. The mother, who was working outside the home, was not so actively present during the daytime while the father balanced various overlapping foodwork acts. In the evenings and mornings, the care act roles were performed according to the situation at the time. In both producer families, the discourses about gendered and 'traditional' labour division in farms shaped the practical enactments of routine care work. Simultaneously the unpredictability and need for flexibility that the framework requires to put an additional strain on the fragmentation and at the same time fostered the ability to squeeze more into available time and make care work more effective.

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The restrictions on space in the Kalniņi house were critical. Making space for other foodwork and activities literally depended on the regular management of the flow of clean-dirty-clean dishes and working surfaces whose space, understandably, was closely connected to the balance between clean and dirty. The model of the open-plan kitchen resembled the spatial ideas of functionalism of the 1930s (see Saarikangas [2006] on functionalist, factory-line

kitchens in Finland) or a *package kitchen*.[25] The fact that anyone standing between fridge, sink and surfaces could reach them all merely by turning on her or his axis suggests that the spatiality was planned to aid the foodwork.

In the Kalniņi kitchen, the spatially and temporally controlled rhythms of dishwashing and cleaning played into experiencing the activity as something unpleasant and obligatory. Indeed, the work closely corresponded to the notion of factory work and, as Mark Llewellyn's research on England shows, such restrained spatiality was designed to parallel the tedious and silent factory work done by men outside the home (in Meah 2016: 43). Following the factory analogy in terms of time, the dishwashing tasks in the other producer, Saulīši family kitchen were shifts that were performed at least three and, sometimes, if there were a family celebration, four or five times daily.

Ieva told me that as they were building the house, the kitchen was intended to be functional, mainly because of the spatial restrictions (as the house is tiny, around 80 square meters on two floors, designed for six people). Little did she suspect that the functionality of the space would also lead to a certain level of everyday stress and obligatory discipline. Of course, their kitchen was not planned with the intention that Ieva would feel like a factory worker, thereby experiencing the heavy workload of her husband Jurģis in the fields. In fact, during my stay, no one ever spoke about or negotiated who was going to take care of the range of cleaning-up activities in the kitchen. As it was work that needed to be done, so it was done by anyone who was in the vicinity and not engaged in other equally important or more critical everyday activities. Nevertheless, the well-intended but also restricting spatiality contributed to Ieva's growing discontent and her regular loudly expressed dreams about the new house that they were planning to build in indefinite future. The house would be with a big, light kitchen. Big windows on at least one wall expand the spatiotemporality of kitchen life both in the idea and in practice.

In the consumer, Ozoli family, the kitchen space felt and was even smaller, as they rented an old but relatively big flat that was built at the beginning of the 20th century. Due to its location in the centre of Riga and based on Ivar's stories

[25] A term representing the design by architect Jane Drew in Britain during 1940s (Meah 2016: 43).

about the flat's pre-WWII inhabitants it was what, in the first decades of the 20th century, was considered property for a well-off urban family (Zelče 2002: 82). During my fieldwork in the first decades of the 21st century, the flat had become a patchworked spatiotemporality of accumulated layers of care but also lack of care.

The Ozoli family flat was similar to many living spaces that resulted when spacious, upper-middle-class apartments underwent the spatial re-distribution typical of Soviet Union times; such flats were usually divided to contain several families sharing the kitchen and bathroom. Furthermore, kitchens, even in such spacious apartments, had originally been planned to be small and compact. When they were built, they were meant for one or two (if the maid had a helper) people cooking and not for five-person families like the consumers in this study, who often tried to fit into the kitchen simultaneously. Often residents were of mixed ethnicity – some Latvian, some Russian – which was the case when the Ozoli family moved into their part of the flat ten years before my fieldwork. The majority of Russian-speaking families in Latvia had been relocated to the country after WWII and allocated nationalised living spaces that were distributed as the communist regime began; in the centre of Riga, these were often parts of bigger flats. Many Russian-speaking families did not have any other living space in Latvia and, after independence was re-established, the so-called communal flats remained intact for much longer than could have been expected, particularly if the house belonged to a not-so-wealthy owner and it was not being refurbished – which often involved expelling the previous inhabitants.

The Ozoli family were young and aspiring middle-class creative workers when they moved into the flat and remained as such as I was doing my fieldwork. They could not afford the significant renovation. Thus, the kitchen, as well as the rest of the flat, was almost in the same shape as it had been in the 1930s, except unkempt and without any visible signs of proper maintenance. When the Russian-speaking family found another place to live, however, the Ozoli family did some essential repairs to get rid of the imposed Soviet aesthetic and structural additions.

Due to the smallness and relatively old condition of the kitchen in the Ozoli flat, the constant presence of dirty dishes was overwhelming; it was hard to miss the overloaded sink on entering the kitchen. Yet, even though

the kitchen was tiny, they had managed to find a place for a dishwasher, which also served as a work surface, craftily covered by a wooden plank made by Ansis. In the Kalniņi family's kitchen, a dishwasher was not considered an option precisely because of lack of space; on the other hand, due to their dishwasher the sink served as a temporary location for the dirty dishes in the Ozoli kitchen; accumulation of these was ongoing throughout the day, with many activities requiring dishes taking place. To make space for each new round, the dirty dishes needed to be stored somewhere: in the sink.

The smallness of the kitchen in the consumer family was experienced and enacted in different ways from that in the Kalniņi farmhouse. During my stay, the tiny size of the Ozoli kitchen created a space for intimate closeness as well as demanding a certain level of agility if there were more than one person taking care of chores. Those could equally be adults or children, although the zones of tactical importance in the kitchen allowed for the presence of two people simultaneously at most. In such cases, there was room to adjust movement and create a relatively harmonious atmosphere. Mastering the choreography came into play as it was necessary to exchange working places continually because most of the locations encompassed several functionalities: the processing surface had a drawer containing all the kitchen utensils beneath it and a shelf for plates and dishes above it, for example. A similar issue could arise when handling the stove and oven simultaneously.

The Ozoli family were the 'most' egalitarian in terms of foodwork division of the three families. Nevertheless, Jana and Ansis often reproduced internalised and unacknowledged gender roles in their division of care foodwork. Thus, Jana oversaw the routine feeding work (cooking and eating are discussed more detail in Chapter Ten), but Ansis took care of the daily dishwashing. This division was explained as a temporary arrangement because Ansis was working from home and often acted as a stay-at-home dad simultaneously. This was a convenient arrangement because the two youngest children often preferred to stay at home rather than going to kindergarten.

The parallel cooking and stacking of the dishwasher required a certain amount of skill as the trajectories of these

both activities crossed each other regularly, so such parallel action was mostly avoided. The open lid of the dishwasher took up too much space and could block access to both working surfaces, which are crucial for processing food. Consequently, half of the kitchen was 'undanceable' in those moments. Moreover, movement around the dishwasher was carried out in two trajectories: first, from the dishwasher to the shelf while unloading the dishwasher, and second, from the sink to the dishwasher when loading it with dirty dishes. As dishes are washed daily, activities around the dishwasher had to be accomplished before and between active cooking tasks, which take place daily as well. Usually, activities involving the dishes began straight after breakfast when most of the family had left home. Another round of dish organising activity often occurred in the evenings at the same time as some cooking was going on.

As seen in the brief ethnographic descriptions above, when organising dishwashing activities in the context of other foodwork, the smallness of available space at any one time is often balanced or extended by fluidity and not so strictly fixed forms of 'assigned' foodwork roles. Indeed, the spatiotemporalities of the kitchen have been appropriated and enlivened following changes in hegemonic discourses on the masculine or feminine predisposition towards domesticity and in respect of the kitchen and foodwork (Meah 2014: 680; on more general changes between the idea and reality of house making also see Douglas 1991).

In the last section, I continue on the theme of the routine and hidden nature of dishwashing and cleaning up and the least noticed and acknowledged of foodwork tasks in the families with whom I lived. Through the example of my own experience in assuming the job of dishwashing, I show how this activity contributed to building emotional as well as social bonds and recognition within my participant families.

Dishwashing and social approval

As noted, washing the dishes and cleaning away between other everyday food practices emerged as the most unrecognised caring work among the families participating in my research project. Here I speak about the recognition

on the deepest level (often unspoken and embodied) of the embeddedness of these acts.

On the level of speech and normative perceptions, washing up was discussed in conversations with the adults of all three families. The men, who usually contributed less to these daily conversations, engaged more actively when everyday duties in the kitchen were discussed. All acknowledged the importance of an equal division of foodwork and all claimed that they contributed to washing up and managing the dishes after meals. From what I observed, however, only in the consumer family were dishwashing and clearing away regularly performed by Ivars. On both farms, the tasks conveniently fell into the category of invisible care work that miraculously *gets done by itself*. Of course, this was far from the case; rather, it felt like something inevitable and unavoidable: a task that has power over its doer, a certain everyday rhythmicality that shapes the actions of the doer without much room for consideration or choice. It seemed that the task became a part of the doer while the doer that embodied the task became part of the spatiotemporalities of the kitchen and the entanglements of care of everyday food work.

The washing up and cleaning away were not the most acknowledged part of crafting and maintaining social relationships and social organisation in all three families, compared with the acts of provisioning and feeding. Nevertheless, my aim in this chapter has been to show that elicitation of their role certainly helps to obtain a fuller, more holistic picture of the entanglements of care that participate in the production and reproduction of certain forms of social relations and their power dynamics.

In this last section, drawing on examples from my own experiences during fieldwork, I want to show how washing up and cleaning away eventually helped to earn me a 'place' in the families' entanglements of care within and beyond the foodwork. As I noted above, the task became 'mine' very soon after I arrived in all three families, partially due to my initiative as I wanted to become a part of the family's foodwork as soon as possible. It was also because the task was not the most beloved and, in practice, was experienced as something of an unwelcome obligation. Indeed, it was the notorious 'elephant in the room', an annoying younger sibling in the 'kinship' of more enjoyable processes of food

preparation, with the most enjoyable being its consumption. Yet, as in a family of siblings, one could not merely disregard its existence; someone had to take care of it.

As time in the families passed, the fact that I became the person responsible for taking care of the dishes contributed to the elicitation and visibility of this caring act on several levels. Firstly, the care act became noticed, discussed and acknowledged simply because it was performed by a 'stranger' in the household. In the consumer family, there were several times when my 'help' with the task was recognised and highly appreciated, although mostly my contribution was noticed and briefly raised in passing in conversation humorously. Both Jana and Ivars jokingly wondered how they would live after I left as I had become the 'servant' responsible for the dishwashing. They also admitted that while the task was being performed by me, they could see how huge it was, and how much of their daily time it consumed.

Secondly, the visibility of the task was acknowledged in the farmer families in its relationality and embeddedness in the entanglements of care in foodwork mainly by the women, who were the leading performers in the daily routines. Both Ieva and Inese were highly appreciative of my stepping in. However, neither woman appeared to question the inequality of the labour division and did not enunciate the dreariness of the dishwashing / clearing up chore in any specific way. To them, it was only one more task in the accumulating pile of everyday housework on the farm. It was perceived as important work but not explicitly different in the carefully choreographed entanglements of care acts. Its deep embeddedness in such choreography also became clearer through the way my 'help' and stepping in was verbally appreciated or left unremarked. In the Saulīši family, I twice received vocal appreciation for my performance of the task: once by Pauls (I unravel this conversation later when discussing the third aspect of dishwashing visibility) and a second time by Inese, who thanked me shortly before my fieldwork came to an end.

This second encounter occurred in the context of grieving over a death in the family. On the morning of that day, Inese had received news that her beloved grandmother had passed away. As mourning took over the house, 'help' in

performing the daily foodwork became paramount. Not knowing how to react or behave in this situation I carried on as usual with the tasks of cleaning up, doing no more or less than usual. In the afternoon, when grieving had diminished somewhat in the household, Inese came by as I was performing a task in the kitchen and warmly thanked me for being such a great help on this day. My first internal reaction to such gratitude was a surprise: 'Why now? Why today? I haven't done anything special or different than any other day.' Inese's courtesy clearly illustrates the notion (mentioned above) that the importance of individual foodwork acts can become significant and consequently receive enhanced recognition in relation to other routine care acts. On this occasion, Inese had been more absent from these tasks that day than usual, mainly on the emotional work level. She had realised this and noticed my filling in for this absence and came to thank me. In this way, she acknowledged the importance of the task, giving it greater visibility as an essential part of the entanglements of routine care acts.

Another example of the embeddedness and interrelatedness of different care acts in the household was demonstrated on one of the many occasions when juggling between rhythms and messy care time took place on Jurģis and Ieva's farm. One day, as Ieva was caring for her baby daughter and I was washing dishes to make space for dinner preparations, the second youngest child, Ints, soiled his diaper, requiring quick attention and cleaning operations. The atmosphere in the house became more hectic as Ints started crying and calling out for mom to come and wash him. Ieva was feeding the baby and asked if I could look after Ints. As the dinner time was approaching, washing the dishes was very important, but lost priority due to a more pressing care act; afterwards, however, it needed to be squeezed into the shorter amount of the time remaining as the family would be hungry and still want their dinner on time.

The final aspect of visibility to be discussed here is connected with recognising the person performing the care act and highlighting her situated and contextualised personhood. Rather than the result of simply being noticed and acknowledged, this form of visibility was one that accumulated. For example, making my usual contributions to foodwork on the day of Inese's grandmother's death

emerged as an important way of earning special acceptance status within the kinship relationship of the family as a temporary member or as a jokingly styled 'help' (servant).

On one of the last evenings in the Saulīši family, Pauls entered the kitchen where I was taking care of dishes at around 11 pm. With an equal measure of puzzlement and acknowledgement, he asked, 'So you are left as chief here?' 'What is the chief?' I asked, to which he replied, 'The person working at the heart of the house'. In line with other understandings of the labour division in the Saulīši family drawn from conversations with Pauls and Inese, by 'the heart of the house', he meant the kitchen, which is considered to embody the spatiotemporality of women's care (Carsten 1997; DeVault 1991).

Pauls' reaction also showed that the family had come to consider me someone who could keep up with the household's daily tasks, while his acceptance of my role at the 'heart of the house' became an acknowledgement I had become part of the kinship relationship in the household (Carsten 1997, 1995). It is also important to contextualise this process of becoming more visible in happenings that were part of the interconnected entanglements of care on the farm. For example, on the same day that Pauls remarked on the 'chief at the heart of the house', I had also been (coincidentally) helpful to Pauls tending to rams (discussed in Chapter Eight). Thus, the cumulative effect of the temporal aspects of regularity and rhythms with which the foodwork and other farm work were performed contributed to the appreciation of a task that was performed in a single moment at the 'heart of the house'.

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My main intention throughout this chapter has been, firstly, to conduct an analytical exercise in addressing and recognising hard to grasp and contextualised forms of routine care work. Secondly, the ethnographic description it contains addressed the deep emplacedness of the routine care acts – particularly the principal focus of this chapter: washing dishes in the spatiotemporalities of homes and kitchens – as exemplifying the enclosed and at the same time living and changing arenas of everyday care through

foodwork in the households. Thirdly, in the last part of the chapter, I return to the importance of noticing and recognising the most entwined and seemingly inseparable care acts in foodwork. Drawing on my observations in the kitchens of my research participants, I highlight the different contexts of dishwashing in which a raised awareness and recognition of the task also allows the attribution of a specific value and importance to the activity.

Chapter 7

Caring about values: organic principles, friendship and volunteerism

Movements in general – whether political, economic, social, or, as in this case, food-associated and therefore spanning the categories – experience moments of creation and constant questioning and adjustment of their values and motivations in the continual process of their operation; indeed, this is also the mode of their existence. As their name implies, movements are entities on the move, whether they are local (like TP or GAS in Italy [Grasseni 2013]) or global (like Slow Food or the Urban Farming Movement); they are also rather complex structures with the potential for inner conflict and constant negotiation (Siniscalchi 2013: 296). Identifying and defining TP's values, developed in the course of conflict and negotiation, acknowledges the complexity of its formative circumstances and developmental processes – and it with this task that this chapter engages.

Following Tronto, Muehlebach and Puig de la Bellacasa's division between ethics and the practice of care in which ethics alludes to caring about and practice implies caring for (I talk in detail about this in Chapter Two), the focus of this chapter lies mainly on the aspects and implications of *caring about* inherent in the movement's values and motivations displayed in the process of making the movement. Thus, I provide an in-depth reflection on my perceptions and interpretations of the values, motivations and ideals behind TP as well as those of its participants. I focus on three central values of the movement – *organicity, friendship and volunteerism* – which were manifestly the most important in the movement's communication and self-perception during my fieldwork, for a number of reasons. They were listed as values (*vērtības*) by the participants themselves and, thus, are approached as emic concepts in this chapter. I also show throughout this

dissertation that in practice these three values were both ideals (for example, the imagined tropes of identification in the notion of human-made nature, see Chapter Four) and motivations for the very practical care acts. Moreover, organicity, friendship and volunteerism were also officially defined as central values of the movement and were included in core descriptions of it and often cited in different presentations including educational seminars and the media. Finally, as will become clear in the course of the chapter, these three values became of the utmost importance when the movement was experiencing crucial transitions in its ideas and work and when new and essential changes were suggested and discussed. Indeed, conceptualising the three values became one of the methodological entry points of my research and a theme to which I always referred during semi-structured interviews and conversations with research participants. I aimed to discover how they perceive these values, and what, if anything, they mean in general and for them personally.

This chapter weaves together observations from several events during which these values were raised and questioned, analysis of individual perceptions and interpretations provided by research participants, and my interpretation of the three values in light of participant observation and interviews. The chapter's narrative follows the linear temporality of a series of changes in the movement connected with what was called *bio pāreja* (organic transition). I start with a description of the first and one of the most critical meetings (during my fieldwork), held in November 2016, which exhibited some interesting elements of the movement's politics. It was also my first significant encounter with the movement as a community, rather than as separate participants in the form of my host families.

The organic transition project was intended to mobilise and reorganise the movement in ways that would ensure that the produce it sold would be provided solely by certified organic producers. This intended directionality created or at least illuminated accumulations of understanding of the three main values among the various actors of the movement, accumulations characterised by cracks, ruptures and diversity of perception and enactment. As the chapter progresses, I look at the various perspectives more closely through the lens of consecutive, smaller meetings and conversations with participants.

The organic transition meeting

At the end of October 2015, Zita, one of the founders and leaders of the movement, sent out an email, initially to the members of her branch (in Riga, that was one of the first and core branches of the movement), although it was later circulated among the other branches in Riga and the regions. It contained a call for an urgent get-together. Zita explained that now, as the movement had become almost a brand and symbol for organic provisioning practices, it was time to come together and evaluate whether it was living up to its values and whether the change was required. She went on to list some examples of bad practice that were spreading across the branches: collaboration with too many producers, not enough of whom were 'honest'; misperceptions about voluntary work among practitioners and so on. She invited everybody to join the meeting, reflect together on the current situation and engage in a workshop whose goal would be to draw up more specific working principles for the movement in the future.
Zita added that the core of her branch, the founders and unofficial leaders of the movement, were drafting a proposal for these new principles, which would be discussed and used for the workshop; this was necessary to protect the producers and also the consumers' needs for organic produce (Also in Lammer 2017: 3). Holding meetings and workshops of this nature regularly is not unusual in alternative provisioning systems. Grasseni (2013) writes that GAS (Gruppo de Acquisto Solidale or solidarity purchase groups), in Italy, organises a range of regular meetups, workshops and assemblies to discuss issues including securing produce quality; the role certification plays; balancing informality with the legality in GAS activities; and how to make a more significant impact by educating society and promoting food sovereignty (2013: 10–11). These matters were also topical on a regular basis in TP and were raised at the meeting discussed in this section as well as at other public and more private gatherings of movement participants during my fieldwork.

On the afternoon of Sunday, November 8, I attended the meeting with Jana, the mother of the consumer family with whom I was staying at that time. The room was almost full as we entered and I took a quick count – 20 women,

including me, and nine men. There were representatives from four regional and four Riga branches. One of the male attendees opened the gathering promptly, introducing the first speakers, Zita and Elza – both TP founders – whom he titled 'mothers of the movement' with a note of pride in his voice. Indeed, in the popular discourse that circulated among the movement's most active participants, they were mothers in at least two senses – symbolically as the mothers (founders and caretakers) of the movement and, in very real terms, as mothers to their children. The birth of their daughters also provided the main impetus for establishing the movement in the first place.

Zita presented first and I noted that she did an excellent job. Her voice was firm and engaging and she had prepared a compelling visual presentation with data on, and evaluation of, the movement's work so far. I also noticed, however, that Zita had a slight yet detectable hint of irony or even sarcasm in her voice. The tone became explicitly sarcastic as she pointed out that the movement had come to be associated with the organic brand and greenness mainly thanks to ample media coverage during the previous year.
The ironic undertone left me wondering. Did she doubt the movement? Was it a pose? Why did she not want to admit that the movement was an achievement? Irony and even sarcasm are not rare in the tone of voice in an everyday public speech in Latvia. An awkward feeling of imperfection and insufficient achievement is not an unusual component in presentations of business and work results to colleagues and stakeholders in different spheres of social and economic activity. This can be explained by a discourse of envy of others' achievements and discouragement of success, which have been described in ethnographic work on Latvia in the last ten years. Anthropologist Dace Dzenovska shows that this kind of social environment has influenced recent emigrants to the extent that they do not find the option of a return to the homeland appealing (2012: 180). Sedlenieks, in his research on the collaboration and cohabitation aspects in the small town of Mierpils, Latvia has found that the constant denial and diminishing of one's own success are, in fact, a strategy – or, as he calls it, a form of 'therapeutic magic' – aimed at avoiding possible envy. This overly critical attitude towards one's own achievements does not necessarily represent 'reality'; rather, it is an imagined and performed form of

reality that covers up the 'real', possibly successful state of affairs. Such a strategy, Sedlenieks points out, has also been common elsewhere in Latvia (2014: 75).

As the presentation at the meeting proceeded, it became apparent that one of the main reasons why people had been gathered was to examine the problems and weaknesses of the movement by reassessing the three primary values: organicity, friendship and volunteerism. Both 'mothers' had gathered some preliminary comments and evaluations about the work of the movement from participants of several branches. Based on this feedback and discussions among the leaders, three main weaknesses in the current work of the movement had been established. Firstly, there were branches with 'deformed' ideals (according to the leaders); in practice that meant that these branches were paying the persons in charge, which contravened one of the main principles and values of the movement – volunteerism (more about the challenges of voluntary work in Chapter Nine). Secondly, there was growing disappointment with the fact that the movement was not entirely organic (also one of the main reasons why the meeting was held in the first place). In practice, it meant that branches were collaborating with both certified and non-certified providers. Thirdly, branches were continually struggling with several practical problems and mishaps that were affecting the work efficiency of the movement at large.

To support their stance, Zita and Elza then invited Laima, one of the key influencers and activists of the movement, to join the presentation. At the time of my fieldwork, Laima was working as a consultant in the Countryside support organisation (*Lauku atbalsta dienests*), thus meeting farmers regularly; she knew their problems and interests better than anyone else present at the meeting. Laima assured the audience that she was ready to talk to them about their willingness to continue collaboration with the movement as entirely organic farmers (meaning certified or on the certification path). She also hoped that these visits would strengthen the friendly relationships between farmers and consumers. Laima's smile was soon replaced by something between disappointment and anger, however, as she pointed out that, unfortunately, many farmers she sees in her daily work are not living up to the movement's values, adding sadly that the profit motive drives many of them. Paige West (2012) describes similar attitudes among

actors involved in organic coffee production in Goroka, Papua New Guinea. She explains that those who are not involved in the production of the coffee but rather in the promotion of valuation of it (such as the governor of the province or coffee industry executives) have a 'clear-cut' opinion about the motivations and abilities of the farmers' organic principles (2012: 149). As the promoters and distributors of the organic produce knew better what farmers think and what motivates them to engage in organic production.

According to common perceptions among TP consumers, some farmers' sole focus on profit was directly reflected in the quality and even the credibility of their produce. The reputations of such farmers were tarnished by accusations of substandard quality, old or tainted produce, irregularities in weight and similar, their dishonesty being seen as both a pursuit of profit and a poor attitude to their crops: two sides of the same coin (I return to the theme of farmers' profit motives in Chapter Eight).

Laima continued by suggesting that long-term communication with the farmers on the importance of organic principles could change their ambiguous attitude. She was convinced that mainstreaming the value of organic farming is a doable task, one enabled by the empowerment supplied by the friendship between producers and consumers, another founding TP value. A similar situation appears to exist in alternative food provisioning practice in China where, according to Lammer's descriptions (2017: 11), consumers also manifest their care towards their 'peasant friends' by educating them. To conclude her speech, Laima announced, 'Let's claim back a farmer's face on every product. The farmers need to be known.'

Putting somebody's face to their produce results in substantially shortening the distance between producers and consumers (physical and emotional), thereby sustaining regular working relationships between actors involved (for a more detailed discussion, see Chapter Nine). By choosing the value of friendship as one of TP's building blocks, the founders and active promoters of the movement had the precise aim of reducing the distance between the food producer and consumer; the building and maintenance of friendly relations if not actual friendships were considered a perfect tool to facilitate short term

collaboration. As this subject was also discussed later in the working groups after the meeting, I examine practical suggestions for implementing friendly relations when describing this stage of proceedings.

As an observer, to me, it seemed daunting that all the proposals and solutions for bettering relations and establishing higher standards of collaboration between producers and consumers were discussed solely among consumers themselves. Some attendees also raised this question by asking whether they should invite producers to later meetings to address these issues jointly. The proposal was not discarded, yet there were several persuasive arguments offered against such joint work, mainly expressed by the leaders. Laima also explained that it might be not such a good idea because farmers have such diverse motivations for participation in the movement; moreover, consumers must first be united in, and secure about, their values before they share them with the farmers and the broader social world.

In the following sections, I present more detailed discussions on each of the values listed above. I start with volunteerism as an embodiment of relational care work and then proceed with friendship, which was considered the weakest value by the various participants in the movement. Finally, I conclude with the value of organic principles, examining different approaches to the view that full organicity would secure the other two values, and the view of TP leaders that the overall existence of the movement was tied up with organic certification.

Building relationality through volunteer work

In the conversations with farmers during my fieldwork, many of the same issues came up repeatedly: why farmers find it necessary to participate in the movement, their motivations, and the values that generate these motivations. There is no doubt that all the farmers with whom I spoke valued the ideological side of organic farming and the crops it produced; as many of them stressed, they did not see an alternative. Organic, in their opinion, was the only way to farm, to treat their own and Latvian land with the highest respect. Many of them thought that TP was a

growing movement that has proved that it can work, one which lets them follow their calling and simultaneously benefit financially – at least to some extent.

It must be stated that none of the farmers that participated in my research solely relied on the income from produce distributed through TP. For most, participation in the movement accounted for, on average, one-fifth of their income from produce they were selling for profit; however, most also admitted that it was not just income which motivated them to be a part of the movement (Lammer 2017: 12). Ideas about taking care of the land and preserving it for future generations were important, even though doing so is challenging and comes with more, mainly emotional, investments than expected. On the ideological and emotional level, the movement allows farmers to feel valued for choosing organic farming practices. On the practical level, some farmers pointed out that the opportunity to avoid the middleman in the form of shops was an advantage. Indeed, one young (under 30) farmer who produced herbs and teas and appeared to be one of the most entrepreneurial and business-oriented producers I met during fieldwork argued that, as he sees it, the movement is not an example of an informal economy in any case. Instead, he says, 'It has a normal economic formation.'

On the other hand, Gatis, one of the leading organic cereal producers in Latvia, admitted very openly that for his farm, participation in the movement is beneficial mainly because it means they can avoid paying taxes. While appreciative of the so-called *grey income*, Gatis was very sceptical about what he regarded as the 'murky' status of the movement. At the time of my departure from the field in August 2016, the movement was considered to be a non-standard business formation according to the Lativian State Income Office (Valsts ieņēmumu dienests or VID). Even after several negotiations with the 'leaders' of the movement, no agreement has been reached between the movement and the VID on how to control the former's financial flows and regulate its tax collection. Due to this lack of clarity, farmers could choose whether to pay taxes on their income from the movement or not. Furthermore, Gatis was not convinced that the voluntary work of consumers, on which the movement is based, was legitimate. He compared it with the situation on his farm, where no one – not even a family

member if she or he were working in some capacity to produce something that was going to be sold on the market – could be accounted a volunteer. They all had to be registered as employees, as they were participating in a market production scheme.

As we continued the discussion, I gradually changed the focus as I felt that we had a different understanding of the principle of voluntary work. That is not surprising, as, in its popular Western form, it has been introduced to Latvia to only a limited degree in a narrow NGO sector since independence; furthermore, it has not been the object of public education or mainstream, due to the prioritising of other more urgent democratising matters by the state. Nonetheless, our discussion seemed to leave Gatis with a firm opinion about what are, in his mind, the dishonest workings of the movement.

Voluntarism, like the two other core values of TP's ideology, must be viewed as having a combination of ethical, social and economic importance. Volunteer work on a practical level is considered valuable because, firstly, it helps to retain and enact the values of organicism and friendship. It is not regarded as something resulting in monetary reward but, rather, as *relational labour* (Muehlebach 2012: 7) serving to reproduce relationships between actors in the movement and also between actors and their value regimes. Thus, it substantially contributes to the profile of voluntarism as a social value in the movement. In her analysis of volunteerism in Italy, Muehlebach builds on the scholarship of Hardt (1999) and Negri (1994) to demonstrate that the relationality aspect can be seen as the value that is created in performing what in the post-Fordist era has been called *immaterial labour* (for instance, voluntary work) without an 'end product' (2012: 7).

Secondly, the central economic and as well as the social and the moral value of the volunteer work performed by consumers lies in shortening the distance of the food chain and lowering the price of the produce, which subsequently provides a profit for farmers. The movement's volunteer work replaces the usual middleman: the additional service in-between that, according to the movement's moral framework, prevents real and honest relations between food producers and consumers. The voluntary work in the movement is seen as unalienated, as owned by its doer

(Strathern 1988: 143) and receiver. As Muehlebach puts it, such unalienated work may be seen 'as a vehicle toward freeing human relations from being mediated by the market' (2012: 49). Notions such as these were also promoted during the organic transition meeting.

A rise in voluntarism and voluntary labour has been observed globally (for a list of recent research see Muehlebach 2012), but it is not surprising that the political, economic and social reasoning for such growth is particular, rather than universal. Thus, as Muehlebach writes of Europe, voluntarism has developed as part of postwelfare developments and is 'shifting social architecture' and creating 'new forms of citizenship' (2012: 10). Although both these representations of social change can be detected in most of the voluntarism cases across the world, the particularity of welfarism is an essential marker in the process of a shift towards voluntarism in Europe. By referring to welfarism, Muehlebach is talking about Old or so-called Western and Northern Europe, which has experienced a significant rise in such voluntarism. On the other hand, post-socialist and post-Soviet territories are either uncharted or seen through the same lens as European welfarism in her work, although such an approach should be treated with caution.

Firstly, it should be considered that these territories have never experienced the full phenomenon of the 'welfare state' (in the way Muehlebach addresses it), while its accompanying formation – civil society – has not been a process taking hundreds of years as in Western Europe (Rikmann and Keedus 2013: 151). Secondly, there is a difference between civic continuity in post-socialist spaces, such as Hungary, Poland or the Czech Republic, and that in post-Soviet Baltic states, in which civic activities were more completely extinguished during Soviet rule. Thirdly – and this is a significant aspect of my research – in the Baltic states there was almost no difference between the concepts and practice of 'nation' and 'civil society' in the initial stages of democratisation, and it is only lately that the distinction has started to become apparent (Rikmann and Keedus 2013: 152-153).

Finally, in public and academic discourses which are closely linked to the experience of the welfare state and strong civil society traditions, post-socialist spaces appear either rarely

or as distorted anomalies on the maps of civil society, civil activism and civic responsibility, which are the presumed building blocks of 'Old Western Europe' (Rikmann and Keedus 2013). The conceptualisations and implications of civil society have been critical in the making of the 'Western' image, as opposed to 'non-Western' locations and countries where the absence of a clear division between state and civil society – from the 'Western point of view' – has been defined as a failure (Lammer 2017; Hann 1996). Nevertheless, research by scholars of post-socialist and post-Soviet spaces (Junge et al. 2014; Rikmann and Keedus 2013) also shows that voluntarism is seen as a value in these seemingly uncharted territories and enacted in local ways, combining 'old' and 'new' perceptions and practices. Furthermore, scholarship on architecture and placemaking in the Soviet Union in the '60s and '70s suggests that several forms of public involvement in bettering semi-public spaces – such as yards in newly built residential districts – are overlooked forms of civic activism. Susan Reid, citing Hough and Fainsod (1980), writes that mostly such activism was a compensating mechanism performed by citizens in order to fill the gaps in state care (Reid 2018: 166).

Further perceptions and enactments of volunteerism are discussed in Chapter Nine, where I describe consumers' weekly sorting/distribution shifts.

The 'weakest' value

The topic of friendship has not been on the front line of research inquiries in anthropology due to the significance of kinship in social organisation and relationships; friendship has been viewed as less significant or studied as a part of kinship. Meanwhile, on a conceptual and analytical level, anthropologists have been careful to avoid generalisations and Western-dominated interpretations of what could be viewed as forms of friendship in particular social settings (Beer and Gardner 2015; Desai and Killick 2010; Bell and Coleman 1999). Thus, relations between kinship and its cousin, friendship, have always been close. It has been observed, however, that interest in friendship studies has been developing along with new kinship and personhood studies over the past three decades (Beer and

Gardner 2015; Carsten 1995, 2000). In this time, the most cited research on friendship in various spatiotemporal settings has headed in at least two different directions. Carrier, for example, has advocated discarding the Western notion of friendship as an individualistic pursuit, rather drawing on the abundant ethnographic research on Melanesian dividualism and personhood (Carrier in Bell and Coleman 1999). A decade later Desai and Killick criticised Carrier's approach, arguing that the individualism of friendship, often attributed to the rise of modernity, actually preceded it, as may be seen in Aristotle's classical formulations of friendship. By drawing on examples from ethnographies in South America, they point out that individualism in the formation of friendship is not strictly a Western prerogative; rather than opposing Carrier, however, they suggest a less binary and restrictive approach. Friendship also features in the new kinship studies' paradigm (see Beer and Gardner 2015: 429).

Both relationship forms, kinship and friendship, are sets of activities that maintain and reproduce persons and social organisation, although research on friendship makes a distinction between their 'nature': kinship is deemed ascribed while friendship comprises acts characterised by achievement (Beer and Gardner 2015: 429). This could well be so in theory and for analytical purposes, particularly if we explore a clear-cut division between kinship and friendship as opposing means for organising and maintaining relationships. However, the aspirations and enactment of friendship in TP blur the borders between what can be seen as achieved or ascribed, problematising whether the value of friendship between the participants of the movement should be viewed as a means for performing one's personhood, as friendly community or as a new form of kin.

Ethnographic observation, along with interviews and conversations with participants in the movement, indicated that relationships with the value of friendship were challenging, and raised more questions than they provided aid in strengthening the work of the movement. One way to grasp the movement's representation of friendship is to make a distinction between friendship as an affectionate relationship and friendliness as social conduct and a set of behavioural norms expected of members (see description of the meeting below). In practice, these two forms of social

relationships often overlapped, with both contributing to the forming of personhoods and certain forms of social organisation. It was also hard to distinguish between representations of friendship and friendliness as both were practised simultaneously and interchangeably, as the following analysis demonstrates.

As I mentioned in the introductory part of this chapter, I conceptualised the three values – in this case, friendship – as methodological and later analytical entry points to my ethnographic material in order to understand how they were perceived and represented. Conversations about the value of friendship were particularly revealing of gaps and complexity that persisted between the imagined, interpreted and experienced representations of this value; meanwhile, at the organic transition meeting, friendship was characterised as the weakest value of three, and also blamed for the shortcomings of the other two: volunteerism and organic principles. The first aspect noted by almost every consumer was that friendship is very subjective; the understanding and implementation of it varied from branch to branch, even from person to person. That said, friendship can be viewed – as is stressed as such in research – as an element of intimate, personal encounters in life (Beer and Gardner 2015; Silver 1997: 46).

The strong rootedness of friendship in the realm of personal and subjective intimacies may serve well in creating affective, love-based relationships between two people or small groups. In the case of the movement, where friendship carries instrumental and symbolic weight in facilitating both social and economic relationships and their advancement, the aspect of intimacy and subjectivity created confusion and sometimes a rejection of the application of the value among consumers. Thus, some disagreed with the goal (according to definitions of three central values) of creating friendships/friendly relationships among consumers themselves or between consumers and producers. According to their descriptions of the social aspect, extending their social relations to the movement did not seem important.

On the other hand, Jānis, a young maths teacher from Liepāja, one of the regional branches, was firmly convinced that closeness in affective relationships could be achieved

by invigorating physical proximity and regular local meetings:

Friendship is about informality and the feeling of a strong and tight community. That also involves closer physical presence and communication with each other in spacetime. Such regular physical presence and togetherness promotes the attainment of the same aims and values. (Jānis, interview, February 2016)

In the case of TP it must also be based on close collaboration with the producer, thereby aiming towards co-production, a form of alternative food provisioning described by Grasseni (2013: 30). Jānis admitted that, at the time, the notion of friendship between consumers and producers was somewhat utopian because it was not rooted in principles of equality; relations were not balanced as producers were not sufficiently involved in the process of full collaboration on every level of building a genuinely alternative provisioning system. Those of TP's initiatives which aimed at establishing friendly relations between farmers and consumers produced a situation resembling that described by Lammer (2017) in his ethnography on alternative food provisioning in the 'self-proclaimed ecological village in Sichuan Province'. The author describes a workshop-seminar (very similar to those I attended during my fieldwork) at which different stakeholders gathered to discuss the importance of educating participants of the movement to forge friendly, connective relationships between producers and consumers; this would provide consumers with so-called 'peasant friends'. The mode of doing so almost exactly replicated the methods which Zita and other TP leaders promoted in their communications: consumers would take care of producers who were too small to sell the products of their hard work otherwise, while producers would take care of consumers by growing and offering organic food at affordable prices (Lammer 2017: 2-3).

The fact that an 'ecological village' in Sichuan Province and TP were both beginners on the road towards more organic and responsible provisioning practices was also reflected in the fact that neither acknowledged the necessity for advancements and improvements in minimising barriers to equal friendship. According to Lammer (2017: 12), friendship should be viewed as horizontal by default, yet

often it takes hierarchical shapes in which some actors take on greater responsibility than necessary: for example, in patronising attitudes towards the need to educate producers. Meanwhile, care that is expected from the producers under the rubric of 'friendship', is actually a form of obligation, materialising, for instance, in their asking lower prices for their produce because the consumers are their 'friends' (see also Lammer 2017: 12-13).

The unequal and somewhat hierarchical set-up pointed out by Jānis and sometimes also mentioned by the founders of the movement (see Laima's speech above), was never elevated and identified as a matter that needed work and elaboration. I was left with the impression that promoting core values and their practical enactment was happening in several, not fully overlapping registers (for more detailed analysis, see the following section on different value registers). Moreover, as may be inferred from what Jānis had to say, in some cases attempts were made to apply or activate the values detached from their possible groundedness in the real social organisation of the movement, thus producing or reproducing inequalities that TP was aiming to diminish.

This inevitably raises the question of whether the movement should, therefore, be seen as a mere market exchange initiative that uses the three primary values purely for material gain, both by consumers and producers. Of course, that might be partially true, as the founders have never denied that the purpose of the movement is to create a new form of market exchange between producers and consumers. Some of the participants in my study even admitted that too much friendliness would not help the movement to achieve one of its aims, that is, to amplify the profit of producers. They felt that farmers should prioritise their welfare, not becoming better friends with consumers.

As I mentioned earlier, perceptions and applications of the friendship and friendliness value (as well as the other two core values) took a polyphonic form among consumers. Not all of them thought that relationships between consumers and producers should be viewed as purely instrumental. For instance, a consumer Liene enjoyed the personal friendships she has established with other consumers, most of all the care she feels from the friendly and loving attitude materialised in the produce. Often producers spent time on

personalised and appealing packaging and frequently some of them sent some surplus produce, a gift, that was divided among participants. Liene relishes such caring acts even though she knows that they are partially also marketing activities on the part of producers. Furthermore, the instrumentality of the friendship in the movement should not be viewed only in economic terms, as several of my research participants admitted that they see the value of friendship as a handy, practical tool to improve everyday work and social organisation in the movement and its branches. They see it as a mechanism for building a sense of community and mutual trust as well as ensuring the smooth running of all its processes. To Juta (consumer), the practicality of friendship extended to the possibility the movement provided to maintain her relationship with a good friend who had joined at the same time but with whom she could no longer meet outside the movement because both had recently given birth. The movement thus became a platform for them to continue to meet and sustain their friendship.

Several participants also pointed out that they had made new friendships through the movement. Zaiga (consumer) said that she had met several of her best friends that way, mainly because they had discovered shared interests and values in caring for their families by providing clean organic food, meanwhile sustaining Latvian nature. On the other hand, she does not find nurturing relationships with farmers as important and would not visit producers' farms, despite thinking that sustaining and maintaining good relationships with producers is paramount to the movement. All of them should be treated the same way if they already have earned the consumers' trust. Consequently, Zaiga does not support the top-down application of organic transition in her branch, although she is a supporter of the movement's retaining organic principles.

In the next section, I continue with a description of the polyphony of different registers of the primary values of the movement by depicting how they were interpreted and represented among its members, before describing a crucial meeting between the 'mothers of the movement' and participants from the regional branches in Valmiera and Cēsis. I also highlight the recurring discussion on the

importance of certification addressed throughout the chapter.

Different or multiple registers of values?

More than a month after the organic transition meeting, around Christmas, several members who had not been present at the gathering started to express their dissatisfaction with the proposals via email. The shared reasoning for such discontent was the feeling that top-down pressure from 'leaders' was being applied to make people agree to changes. Some participants saw these changes saw as purely bureaucratic and expressed concern about the consolidation of power in a few hands and the loss of diversity in opinions and choices for action. Thus, although they cared about the movement's ideals and central values, they also wanted them to work for the practical well-being of all so that values enacted in practice would not serve to create or reproduce inequalities.

After these 'email protests' among consumers and the airing of counter opinions on the necessity of the organic transition which was felt like pressure from above and the imposition of ideas not commonly shared, negative responses also started to be heard from *mājražotāji* (small home producers). Their main dissatisfaction over the proposed changes was that their 'smallness' and lack of the necessary financial resources restricted their securing regular certification. Yet, as they wrote in their email responses, it was not only the price of certification that was a problem but also the inability to change to an entirely organic process to secure sales for their product. For example, if a home producer bakes bread, she cannot guarantee that all the ingredients she uses will be organic. Nor would it be profitable to purchase fully organic ingredients, which often must be ordered from abroad, because the small-scale demand and turnover for the product in question would not cover the costs.

Similar email correspondence between 'protesting' consumers and upset home producers continued for almost two months at the beginning of 2016, with this real-time development of events postponing the initial plan to implement the proposed changes in three months. After the

first opposition had settled down, Zita decided to write a lengthy reply to the home producers, in response to their 'unwillingness'. Later the same email was also circulated on the consumers' mailing list. In it, Zita expressed her deep sadness. Her opening argument was that 'we' (meaning a broader group of abstract Latvian residents who care about the environment) need to stand together and protect nature. TP contributes to this cause with its purchases, especially food products, which act as a means (*līdzeklis*) of protection. The more people use these means responsibly, the more the movement will grow and, eventually, the more significant its effect. The practical 'source of light' for achieving the goal of a responsible and protective attitude is, in the case of TP, certification. The email concluded with the sad admission that the greatest mistake – to be corrected by offering a choice of whether or not to start the certification process – was that collaboration with non-certified home producers had been supported in the first place.

Aistara writes that the context of the injustices experienced by small producers in the Latvian countryside is deeply embedded in the political and economic changes that occurred in Latvia after it regained independence in 1990. Accession to the EU in 2004 merely exacerbated the condition. According to Aistara, small producers are often not able to accommodate the regulatory schemes provided and governed by EU institutions and norms (for more on the structural injustices created by participation in EU agricultural financing schemes see Chapter Five). One-household, often subsistence-farm producers do not have the capacity, nor the secure collaborative networks – particularly in processing – that could add to their competitiveness and thus qualify them to even consider certification. Thus, if a small organic farmer or producer wanted not only to survive but also to make a profit, the best road would be to produce raw materials for sale in local and foreign markets (Aistara 2018: 170, 174).

Although the reasons for 'non-collaboration' with the movement's standards strongly reflect the structural inequalities described by Aistara, it also seemed that the movement's leaders could not find the capacity or extra energy to try to better and somehow influence the situation of small farmers. Instead, they decided to hold onto their standards, hoping that by following them the system could

be changed or simply appropriated through strong parallel provisioning practices, like those of TP.

The evolving situation with the small home producers – which was apparently being left for somebody else to solve – was the main reason why perceptions of values and motivations for participating in and sustaining the movement produced conflict between Riga and the regional branches in Valmiera and Cēsis. The two leaders set up a meeting with the members of these branches and local leaders to discuss the reasons for resistance and some possible solutions to the situation. In the last week of March 2016, both leaders – with me as an observer – headed to Valmiera where the meeting with members of Valmiera and nearby Cēsis branches was to be held. When we arrived, some ten people were gathered together – from the Valmiera and Cēsis branches, and also one home producer. All attendees, not surprisingly, were women.

The meeting was opened by a short speech from Zita explaining what she expected from the gathering, 'We begin with the recognition that we support a cleaner environment and also those that are going through the certification process, as it is such a hustle for them.' Elza continued, 'It is hard to trust [uncertified producers] to work by organic methods. Too many interpretations occur. Thus, it is concluded that certification is something secure and the ultimate proof of a farmer's honesty.' After the introduction, representatives from local branches were given the floor. They started by asking a range of questions that disclosed some problematic perceptions of the organic transition.

As I have mentioned, one of the most critical issues raised, which has created the schism between Riga and regional branches' attitudes towards the transition, was the recurring question of home producers. The general opinion that was repeated multiple times by representatives of both Cēsis and Valmiera branches was that the automatic exclusion of small home producers would hurt them and also hurt the branches. Home producers provide around 20% of produce in the regional branches. What is often most important is that they are not just producers but friends or even distant family members. The consumers have known them for many years and wholly trust them, their motivations and their working methods. Thus, to keep

the home producers as providers and sustain their friendly relationships, both branches had considered jumping off the organic transition path. Experiences with the home producers were not homogenous and only positive, however. Attendees at the meeting also admitted that the most important food quality or trust problems they have encountered so far have been with the home producers. Because they are so richly represented in the movement, they tend to comply with the general certification system very rarely or not at all.

As a result of the discussion and problematisation of the home producer's positionality, Zita invited all the attendees to propose ideas on how to include home producers without violating the values of the movement. Referring to the often-ambivalent positionality and case to case evaluation of home producers, Zita even suggested putting emotions aside when dishonest farming and production practices were spotted and choosing a certified alternative instead.

The general impression that I, as an observer, obtained from the meeting was that the leaders from Riga and members of TP from Cēsis and Valmiera were discussing the same issues and seemingly appreciated the same values. The clashing atmosphere was created because the discussion was happening in different *registers*. Dace Dzenovska suggests viewing a register as a level or field of perception – that is, a bodily and discursive positionality from which perception and analysis are done. She builds her definition on Massumi's ideas (1995) about registers as affective embodied and discursive representations which are not opposed to each other. Seen in the framework of affect theory the affective register is one of collective perceptions, experiences and rationalisations that are created through different social processes (Dzenovska 2012: 114 referring to Mazzarella 2009, Rudnyckij 2009). In the case of the atmosphere that evolved during the meeting, the pre-assumed representative discursive register of the movement's ideals that was shared by Zita and Elza mixed with the collective affective registers of experiences and rationalisations that were expressed by the other attendees and created and appropriated through the discussion process.

In the final section of the chapter, I turn to one of the primary purposes of the organic transition, organic

certification. TP's full transition towards collaborating only with EU certified producers was promoted as a way to keep the movement's ideals and values intact – at least in the views of the movement's leaders.

The great promise of certification

Since organic movements started up in the Global North, the certification has been perceived as a way to guarantee organic produce quality and protect it against the competition with conventional farming produce. The same motivations leading to EU standardisation were applied in Latvia as the organic movement was establishing its position between 2010 and the time of my fieldwork in 2015 / 2016 (Aistara 2018: 14; Šūmane 2011: 130-131). Yet, as the ethnographic descriptions above indicate, the 'great promise' of certification was not being fulfilled straightforwardly. The expectations of the leaders of the movement that certification could unify and protect both the producers, by privileging them as sole providers of organic produce for the movement, and the consumers, who would receive genuinely organic food at affordable prices, did not always turn out as hoped or planned. The organic transition initiative became a catalyst for vetting the movement's values and motivations; meanwhile, claiming that the way to 'true organicity' was through implementing accountability by certification affected the perception and enactment of the other two values, friendship and volunteerism.

On a more general level, the constant state of negotiation and adjustment demonstrates that perceptions of organicity in Latvia, like elsewhere in the world, did not start with the arrival and introduction of organic certification. Aistara stresses that perceptions and understandings of organic agriculture in different locations are in a constant process of questioning 'historical identities, traditional landscapes and farming practices, ecological conditions and political futures' (2018: 14).

The overall road towards the acceptance and implementation of EU organic certification standards in Latvia was unfolding in several stages (see Chapter Five). Before the majority of organic farmers began to follow the

so-called 'scientific organicity' path, they farmed according to biodynamic methods, and the authenticity of their produce was attested to by the Demeter certification. To ensure that the awarding of pre-EU certification and implementation of European standards went smoothly and 'as it should be', it was entrusted to foreign, European (mostly German) experts in the form of the certification bodies (Šumane 2011: 130-131; Sietiņsons 1996). In 1997 the Demeter certification was accompanied by or exchanged with, the local organic certification, *Latvijas ekoprodukts* (Eco produce of Latvia) approved by the LBLA. The local organic movements decided that Demeter certification was not strict enough, and the number of farmers who were certified according to the system was too small. It was only forty farms, and only six of them had the right to use the Demeter label on their produce (Šūmane 2010: 130). The certification of LBLA became a direct predecessor and a good practice ground for both farmers and state for the implementation of the EU certification, as the general legislation that regulated organic farming practices and certification in Latvia was developed in accordance with the requirements of the country's accession to the EU in 2004. The full set of legislation and regulations came into force in 2003. Simultaneously the network of surveying, regulative and promotional institutions for organic production was established (Šūmane 2011: 136).

The majority of farms in my study were so-called 'old organic' farms, meaning that they had turned to organic farming directly after organic initiatives became more prominent in Latvia on regaining independence. Some started as biodynamic farms; some went straight for the organic status supplied by the LBLA and its certification after it was established in 1998. The only two farms that had either obtained their organic status recently or were still in the transition process were my host farms during fieldwork. As I mention elsewhere in this work, neither were typical post-Soviet 'back-to-the-landers' (Aistara 2018: 23); Inese and Pauls fell into the group of 'young returnees' as the house to which they relocated from Riga was owned by Inese's father and managed solely by him for a time and later by the tenants that inhabited part of the house after his death. They obtained organic status in 2011 before they returned to the farm for good in 2013, after regularly

visiting and working on it for several years. Ieva and Jurģis, on the other hand, were 'transformed newcomers' as Jurģis' parents gardened in kolhozes in Soviet times as well as selling flowers and plants from their garden, one of the legally tolerated 'business' activities in Soviet Latvia, which secured its practitioners some economic capital. Ieva came from a non-farming family and was educated in philosophy.

Ieva and Jurģis were going through their own organic transition and were in the conversion period before acquiring organic status during my fieldwork. Before that the farm had been using so-called integrated methods: synthetic fertilisers and some pesticides were applied only when necessary, they told me. In addition to his more than twelve-hour workday, Jurģis was attending organic education courses and seminars. He was also expected to attend a general farming course in the autumn of 2015. Such courses cost 250 euros at that time, and Ieva said they would need to save to cover it as things had not been going very well for them lately. The biggest struggles attendant on turning towards entirely organic farming were taming and cultivating the soil to make it suitable for growing the diverse organic produce that sprawled across the farm (discussed in detail in Chapter Nine). When they began renting the land from Jurģis' family, they knew that they would have to start from scratch; indeed, the crop lines that I encountered during my fieldwork were being cultivated in a meadow. Ieva compared their seven-year struggle against weeds with Don Quixote's tilting at windmills**.** Ultimately, Ieva and Jurģis remained slightly sceptical and critical about the organic transition being promoted by the movement as it was partially pushing them into 'getting the papers done' (*dabūt papīrus*) sooner than they might have liked.

The hassle with papers and the enormous amount of time and energy it took each year from the farmers was a recurring narrative in conversations, particularly with women farmers – whether in the role of the primary owner of the farm or co-owner/co-labourer/wife (on dealing with controlling institutions as a full-time job, see Aistara 2018: 145-146). For some reason, paperwork among the participants in my research was always left to women in the general scheme of the 'division of labour' on the farm. Like dishwashing, it was care work that needed to be done to secure the organic farming processes, a form of *routine care*

of temporally prolonged regularity but, in this case, with a very high level of responsibility. On a practical level and in terms of the task's emplacement in everyday routines, it was often done in overtime. Thus, Ieva on the sheep and bee farm where I stayed would fill in some of the annual forms on the internet at one in the morning (1:00 AM) after all the other daily tasks were done.

All the women farmers who raised the topic of paperwork mentioned the extent of the task's unpleasant embodied and sensorial effects. Dārta, a crop farmer, said that when the time of the year came for all the paperwork to be done, she had a physical reaction to the process that bordered on nausea and something that could qualify as panic attacks. Other women did not report such severe reactions, yet their stories bore commonalities of general unpleasantness. One of the reasons for this might have been the importance of the task, mentioned above, and the inability to ditch it. On another level, it could also be explained by the embodied knowledge and social memory of long-term interaction with institutions of surveillance and control in Latvia dating back to Soviet experiences (Aistara 2018: 147). When talking about continual current conflict with the controlling institutions that were coming to the farm to make sure they followed all the EU norms and were eligible for the organic status, Daina, a goat keeper, who represented the older generation of farmers and had experienced the Soviet Union, said she believed that it was the Soviet heritage that was undermining the work quality and overall attitude of the representatives of these institutions. Daina was convinced that their general attitude was sustained to 'cover-up' the controllers' misperceptions of the need to implement all the EU norms and follow them. That, she noted, was typical Soviet functionary behaviour (see also Aistara 2018: 147).

A controlling attitude that sees entrepreneurs (and not only in the countryside) as possible criminals, thereby promoting a permanent environment of distrust, has been observed by other anthropologists working in the Latvian countryside (Dzenovska 2012: 157). Meanwhile, Klāvs Sedlenieks suggests that viensētas, that can include also permaculture farms and other small-farming entities in Latvia are to some extent objects of uncontrollability, as are their practices. He writes that because of their small size, these rural enterprises fall under the radar of the

overseeing, controlling state and are relatively free to pursue their work and lives unnoticed. The opportunity for small farms to continue living like this is associated with wellbeing and a good life on their own land (2012: 111). Seen from this perspective, the farmers' embodied reaction could be interpreted as a negative response to attempts by the state and the EU, through the overarching mechanisms of organic certification systems, to control and thus endanger the wellbeing and life on small farms once farmers have agreed to take part in these more significant standardisation schemes.

Returning to the farmers' valuation of organic transition: on the one hand, Ieva and Jurģis, like the rest of the farmers I encountered (some more, some less), expressed regret about the need for such strict bureaucratisation of the movement. Farmers saw it as evidence that consumers do not fully trust producers. On the other hand, as many of them have experienced what it means to break their way and survive in the changing Latvian agriculture market while transiting through several stages to gain true organic status[26], they also supported the movement's initiative.

During fieldwork, it also became clear that on the level of everyday practice, farmers did not distinguish organic from conventional farming as strictly as consumers. To the farmers in my study, farming organically seemed the only acceptable way to take care of the land and their livings. Followingly certification was 'normalised' as a thing that must be done and that, to some extent, acknowledged their efforts and struggles. However, it was not necessarily seen as something that would increase their earnings or improve their status in the general scheme of agriculture in Latvia.

On the surface, the organic transition proposal, which aimed for a 'democratically' accepted and implemented

[26] As I write in Chapter Four, organic agriculture in Latvia has gone through several stages of transformation. These stages have mainly been one directional and have led to a higher standardisation and compliance with global principles for organic agriculture. Two recent temporary benchmarks of these transformations were the agrarian reforms of the 1990s and the ensuing rise in agricultural activities, and accession to the EU in 2004 that, thanks to the accompanying subsidies for agriculture, caused an explosive rise in the number of organic farms in Latvia. During my fieldwork the situation in organic agriculture in Latvia could be characterised as stable and steadily growing. It was also synchronised with general trends in organic agriculture across Europe although the official policy and activities of the Ministry of Agriculture continued to lobby for and support conventional, large-scale farming.

exchange of solely certified goods within the movement, looks like a top-down initiative by its leaders and the movement's most active participants. Undoubtedly, one of the primary goals of organic transition in TP has been to take care of the organic farmers who participate in the movement: to protect them from the competition with non-certified producers (by excluding them) and to secure balanced competition among the organic producers themselves, one that leaves enough space for the farmers to make a profit while retaining affordable prices for consumers. Still, as can be seen from the ethnographic descriptions in this chapter, the process of organic transition also reflects the complexity of perceptions and experiences of the process for the different actors involved. Thus, while the leaders of the movement think that they are taking care of the farmers, the latter meanwhile take care of themselves and their farms, balancing their relationships with the controlling institutions and also aspiring to attain the organic standards of produce that accompany the certification process.

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I continued to meet and correspond by email with the leaders of the movement throughout 2016, and they continued to reiterate that organic transition could not be viewed as concluded. One of the main reasons they listed was technical. The technical staff had not been able to devote enough time and human capacity to restructuring the online code and setting up a new, improved system that would offer a clear and transparent platform for consumers who want to order organic food from organic farmers. Such a system would display easily searchable information on the certification status of each producer, as well as detailed information about each product and its ingredients. Nevertheless, the impression I was left with was that the reason that transition did not turn out as intended was not just about technical incapacity. The multitude of contextualised opinions, registers of perception and interpretation of the movement's values were also setting the course of the project.

Caring about the values and motivations in TP did not necessarily imply good and pleasant experiences. Instead, a continual process of negotiation was underway among different caring actors as the movement was also constantly revisiting and questioning these values on its journey of self-discovery. This also meant that a self-regulating spatiotemporality was required where the diverse understandings and enactments of the three central values could meet or exist simultaneously. This, in turn, depended on the ability and wish of the different actors involved to show a certain amount of care. Ultimately this would imply not only caring about but caring for, including better production; trustful, honest and friendly relationships in the movement; and higher ideals regarding the land and the environment.

In the next chapter, I shift my focus from the polyphony of caring about values to the polyphony and thickness of care in production. Examining the importance of experimenting, embodied skills and entangled aspects of multiple temporalities, I show how the care applied to the land contributes to the production and reproduction of farms and the movement itself.

Chapter 8

Care in production

'You know what we do, to make them last longer? For a whole week? Sometimes even more? We cut off the tops, and they grow again.' So explains the father of one of the consumer families I visit in Valmiera, among whom fresh pea microgreens are favourite, as they are in many other families I encounter during my fieldwork. These juicy green sprouts are almost like a hallmark of TP membership: small, transparent plastic boxes of pea, sunflower, radish, arugula, broccoli or other microgreens are displayed on counters or tables in many of the kitchens I visit. The parents I interview are happy that peas, seemingly unconventional greens, have become favourites among their children – their sweetness, of course, coming to their aid. Moreover, as implied by the quote above, having these greens at home at any time of the year is part of prolonging and maintaining embedded manifestations of care. Caring for plants on farms has spread to consumers, who care for their families' wellbeing by growing plants and maintaining their lifecycles indoors.

According to the quantitative data provided by Kristaps (the developer of the movement's online ordering platform), the microgreens that are grown on the Kalniņi farm were among the most popular and, therefore, the most frequently ordered products grown by producers throughout my fieldwork in 2015 and 2016.

Throughout the late autumn, winter and early spring, pea and sunflower microgreens are bestsellers. The orders decrease over summer, something which, as Ieva and Jurģis Kalniņi confess, is connected to that work period on their farm's being poorly handled; my stay with them falls precisely into this 'empty time', as they call it. While I am on their farm, I learn that they are doing their best to survive and are continually thinking and experimenting to attain an entirely successful cycle of farming throughout the year. I also learn that the whole process of *tinkering* with

plants on Ieva and Jurģis' farm can be seen more like work *with* than work *on* plants (Kortright 2013). Kortright, who makes this distinction about rice farming, suggests that working on may be seen as a top-down relationship while working with is a horizontal and collaborative activity between humans and plants (2013: 558).

The concept of tinkering has been applied by several care researchers (see, for instance, Mol et al. 2010; Singleton and Law 2013). I endorse their use of the term, seeing it as an appropriate analytical tool for describing the entanglements of care acts in the farms of my research. Thus, I find Singleton and Law's application of tinkering as a term to describe both the repetitive and fluid nature of care for cattle particularly relevant. Such tinkering always carries the high probability that improvisation and creative reaction will be employed if necessary; at the same time, skilled care is crafted in the lengthy process of repetition (2013: 264).

It is never enunciated, the daily labour invested in the whole process of growing plants – from selecting seeds to delivering produce to the customer – is never just a work of objectifying and producing commodities. Rather, it is a constant negotiation requiring considerable care that involves human and non-human actors (plants, soil), as well as different external and structural circumstances, of which two of the most influential in the case of organic farming are weather conditions and the state of the market. These entanglements between different actors and affecting circumstances were clearly demonstrated in the regular (re)production routines on the Kalniņi and Sauliši farms, described in some detail below.

This chapter principally discusses whether production on farms can be interpreted as care according to the familiar definition by Fischer and Tronto, who mainly see it as maintenance, repair and continuation (1991), a formulation that recurs throughout my dissertation. In this chapter, I am mostly interested in revisiting Tronto's addition to this definition of acts that she suggests cannot be considered 'care'. Among these, she lists creative and production processes as such, mainly if they are to deliver some kind of end product (1993: 104).

Therefore I build on one of the most complete overviews of care on farms by Hans Harbers (2010), who addresses the

importance of viewing care on farms as a holistic system, as an indissoluble entity of intertwined economic and loving care acts that make farm life possible. Harbers further writes that care and economy on farms should not be viewed as 'mutually exclusive', as the two determine and shape each other; indeed, often 'economy is care' as the value of produce is created through caring entanglements with humans by providing them with income, the freedom to work and continuity for the farm (Harbers 2010: 156; 152-153; 164-165). Such a farming system works as a full care cycle. I build on Harbers' observations and analysis throughout my own description of the production processes on the farms in my study, showing that constant creativity, experimentation and production were essential aspects of their care acts. To support my interpretations of the ethnographic data I also refer to the work of Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) and Kortright (2013) in which they call for the recognition of creative and experimental aspects of care when addressing scientific knowledge-making and farming processes. These suggestions are part of a broader discussion about the almost ungraspable and constantly unfolding nature of care acts (Mol 2008, Mol et al. 2010), one that invites researchers to apply equally creative methodological and analytical approaches.

Creativity and experimentation, closely linked to embodied knowledge and skill-making processes (Kortright 2013; Singleton and Law 2013), constitute the continuity of maintenance of care spatiotemporalities on the farms of my research. Like other entanglements of care that I describe in this work, care on farms must be approached, and can be better understood, as situated complexities of care acts. At the same time, what I also show here is that untangling these complexities and taking a closer look at their particularities contributes to noticing and interpreting the situated and contextual ways of their making and being.

My discussion of the importance of creativity, experimentation and production alludes to Marx's understanding of production and re-production processes, demonstrating that farm production for TP can be seen as reproduction, something Marx understood as representing the never-ending process of production and consumption (1973: 464); it is, however, impossible to assume that any form of farm production viewed in this chapter is what Marx would call *production proper* (1857: 24). Instead, as

further ethnographic descriptions illustrate, the production processes that are present on the farms are a constant tinkering between either *productive consumption* that reaches out and connects with consumers through the produce or *consumptive production* in terms of recreating one's own farm and family.

While emphasising the importance of tinkering care on farms, I simultaneously highlight another vital and integrated aspect of care acts, that of reaching out and relationality (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Jarosz 2011; Kneafsy et al. 2008; Tronto 1993). Relationality, connecting and being constantly aware of the world in which care is enacted are defining qualities of care acts according to Fischer and Tronto's formulation of care (1991). Similarly, relationality and reaching out have shaped the characteristics of alternative food provisioning practices and the very core of the care acts performed in these practices (Jarosz 2011; Kneafsy et al. 2008). In the context of my research, these qualities are sustained in the mutuality between humans, plants and animals on farms, and also in relations between producers and consumers in the exchange of produce and cash. It is, thus, a care act when producers reach out by offering their produce, while consumers care for producers by paying them directly without a middleman.

Representations of the ethics of care among consumers in alternative food movements have increased in the work of social and cultural researchers in recent decades (Lammer 2017; Cairns et al. 2013; Kneafsy et al. 2008), although they are mainly contained in a broader framework of ethical consumption practices (Pratt and Luetchfor 2014; Jung et al. 2014; Grasseni 2013; Carrier and Luetchford 2012). Researchers who have focused on the implications of the ethics of care have mainly been interested in the balance between individual aspects of care for one's own family and children, and care for producers and the environment (Cairns et al. 2013; Lammer 2017). Similarly, there has been relatively little research on producers' 'ethical' reasoning and behaviour in alternative food movements, including the ethics of care in production processes on farms. With the advancement of provisioning practices, such as Community Supported Agriculture in the USA, however, aspects of care both in production and

consumption have become a topic of interest among researchers (Kneafsy et al. 2008: 42).

In the farming context, relationality and reaching out obtain an extra layer because it is not only human actors that are involved in the creation of spatiotemporalites of care (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Harbers 2010; Tronto 1993). As I show in this chapter, non-human actors, such as soil, animals and plants also participate in everyday acts of care. Thus, the spatiotemporalities of care on the farms become multilayered, care-filled worlds of constant tinkering between production, reproduction, consumption, creation and experimentation.

Planning, learning and experimenting

On one delivery trip to Riga (described in detail in Chapter Nine), Jurģis from Kalniņi tells me how they started with the microgreens. As with many other things they are doing on their farm, it was a quest motivated by curiosity, more like an experiment than planned. Kortright writes that in line with the binary of working with or working on the plants, experimentation performed by farmers has always been seen more like the former. In contrast to the controlled and 'detached' experiments performed in science that are seen more as work *on* plants, farmers' trials have been seen as messy and unreliable and thus unaccountable. Nevertheless, experimentation and testing in farming are critical approaches that can improve cultivation results (Kortright 2013: 560).

Jurģis remembers how he was surfing the seed sellers' pages years before when suddenly he stumbled on the seeds of microgreens and baby salads. In the beginning, he was convinced that no one would buy such niche and uncommon produce in Latvia. Now that they have established their position as one of the pioneers of microgreens and a 'big' player, especially in the organic market in Latvia, he is happy that they dared to experiment. As he says, 'The market was there, we just didn't know about it.' In the beginning, he was somewhat sceptical as Ieva started packing their first orders. Back then, their finances were very limited, and they needed to calculate everything very carefully. Thus, they soon learned that it

was not worth making the delivery trip to Riga unless the order was over 50 lats (around 80 euros, as they started the business before Latvia entered the Eurozone in January 2014). However, eventually, orders began mounting, and one day there were so many orders there was no longer space in the car for them all. Jurģis thinks that part of their successful entry into the market was that they decided to focus on the winter. They chose the right time, as he says. Winter in Latvia is typically bereft of local leafy green vegetables and people want something green and fresh. While, of course, foreign producers offer French and Spanish salads from January to April, Jurģis and Ieva's daring offerings soon took equal position along with the foreign vegetables, because consumers preferred locally produced greens.

They have started from zero with many plants and endeavours, including tomatoes, learning through success and mistakes. For example, they have realised that it is essential to pinch out the side shoots that develop along the stem of tomato plants, while, in June, the top of the plant needs to be pruned. This provides the plant with more energy and more and healthier fruit. With some plants they are still halfway; for instance, they do not know why spinach, one of their leading products as a microgreen, gets rotten. One guess could be that plants do not like it when it is too hot. All plants are sensitive to the temperature, Jurģis observes. Thus, aubergines like warmth, but only up to 30C; if it gets hotter than that, they dry out and lose blossoms. On the other hand, factors such as unbalanced soil nutrients or bacteria can also cause salad vegetables to rot in such a way that a crater appears amid the micro salads as the rotten leaves cave in.

Apart from the necessary collaboration between humans, plants and weather/climate conditions, the soil is a critical factor. The right degree of moisture in the soil is a determining factor in growing microgreens. As the Kalniņis change the soil regularly (see the following subsection on land and soil), they need to make sure it is moist enough before they add the seeds to the plastic trays. In the beginning, they did not know that soil could be prepared by actually mixing water into it, rather than just pouring it on the surface. In the initial stages, the latter method might lead to overwatering the plants, thereby encouraging the process of rotting.

Ieva and Jurģis plan their farm very carefully every year, with Ieva drawing up detailed plans for the plants and their arrangement in a notebook. They learn from the successes of previous seasons, yet always try something new. Thus, one evening, as we are having tea and conversing, Ieva proudly shows me a hand-drawn map for the current year's plant layout, as well as tables of planned and already ordered seeds. Ieva also tries to make notes on the activities and events on the farm, recording all the successes and losses of the growing seasons, noting which plants can be planted the following year, and which not. Regular farm books also need to be kept under regulations issued by the European Commission on organic farming[27] as their farm is in the organic transition period.

On the same delivery trip to Riga, Jurģis also tells me about how slowly processes to do with the farm go forward, and how impossible it is to get done things as planned. For example, they wanted to build two more greenhouses this summer. It is July, and they have barely managed to lay the foundations for the first. They plan to grow strawberries in one at least, to be able to offer the first berries to consumers; however, there are several risks, as with tomatoes. Indeed, Jurģis observes that every endeavour in farming is risky as weather affects both fields and greenhouses equally. Thus, risk often goes hand in hand with learning and experimentation in the constant tinkering processes that affect everyday life on the Kalniņi farm.

Land and soil

As the Kalniņi farm is solely a crop farm, its primary production means are land and soil. In one of our more extended discussions over everyday tasks in the kitchen, Ieva laments that it is rather sad they have not inherited an old family farm (like several farmers in my study) and that they need to build everything from scratch. The good part is that they have land. At least, Ieva stresses that currently, they are renting most of it, stretching from behind the greenhouses – about two-thirds of their production area –

[27] COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 889/2008 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/LV/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32008R0889

from Jurģis' father. At the time of my fieldwork, they had a rental agreement for ten years. Before they were married, land close to the rented area that would be a great addition to their farm was owned by Jurģis' mother and divided between Jurģis and his brother. Today altogether two hectares of this land is divided between an area closer to the forest that belongs to Jurģis' mom and a field across the road with a pond that is owned by Jurģis' brother. Jurģis is planning to buy the land from his mom and brother; otherwise, if they build a house on their land in the future, his mom and brother would need to pay higher land tax. Therefore, it would be wise to buy them out. Yet Jurģis' mother's land is 'complicated' because it is in a nature reserve which Ieva and Jurģis' family could not work anyway, so Ieva is puzzled as to why they should pay its land tax if they cannot perform any economic activities on it.

Ieva and Jurģis' struggle for land reflects the perceptions and discourses – and is the embodiment of land and human relations – that have enduring and almost mythical standing in Latvia's history (Aistara 2018: 33). Against the historical backdrop of different 'occupations' of the country (German rule until the 19th century and Soviet collectivisation in the 20th century), the longing for one's own land is probably one of the most durable sentiments 'fuelling' the nation's self-esteem and attempts to define itself as an independent, self-sufficient society that owns its territory and is capable of ruling it. This in line with the ideology of agrarian nationalism that was instated profoundly with the establishment of the Latvian state in the interwar period, and has been linked to the ethos of work on the land that has been seen as a way to maintain and continue the existence of a 'strong' nation (Priedīte 2012; Purs 2012; Schwartz 2006).

The longing for an already functioning farm expressed by Ieva illustrates the link between work and land in their case. Her laments address the necessary hard labour that is needed to start and create a farm in an empty place, overtaken by wilderness. Tedious work on the land is turned into the well-nurtured spatiotemporality of a farm (*saimniecība*) of which a substantial part is a soil. I continue with a description of soil management in the production of microgreens.

Most of the produce Ieva and Jurģis grow falls into the

category of microgreens: sprouts in plastic boxes and baby salads in the greenhouses on specially designed 'tables' – boxes on legs which are filled with soil or, in the case of sprouts, with the plastic boxes filled with soil. This soil, at around 120 euros per batch, is changed every week, some weeks even twice. This is not the most expensive soil one could find, comments Ieva; however, it is in a way a luxury and not very cost-effective, which is why they need to increase the price of their produce. The soil is not reusable and is usually discarded on the big compost pile behind the greenhouses. Jurģis also asserts that work with such purchased soil is somewhat of a luxury as not all plants like it: for example, it is too acid for wheat while mustard grows to the size of a baobab, he exaggerates. Another thing, according to Jurģis' observations, the quality of the soil they are buying has diminished of late. Today they can grow only half what they could produce a few years earlier in the same amount of soil. Finally, they have decided to buy one kind of soil only for microgreens, while for salads they buy from another retailer. The decision was made based on the qualities of the soil and what works for each plant, as well as price.

Even if farmers wanted to reuse the soil in the same line of microgreens production, it would not be possible as they are restricted in time. They need a well-prepared and fertile soil with all necessary nutrients instantly and regularly although Ieva says that if they had the time, they would certainly prepare their own soil.

At the time of my fieldwork in 2015-2016, there were only a few providers in Latvia specialising in offering organic soil to the organic farms. It was mainly used in organic greenhouse and microgreens farming, which was a small niche activity in which the Kalniņi farm was one of the leaders, as noted above. Being obliged to change their soil constantly, Ieva and Jurģis were subdued to the 'utilitarian care vision' in the productionist soil care paradigm (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 186). Broadly, this meant that the way they were obliged to handle the soil complied with the model that sees soil as a means of producing maximum output. Such *objectification* of care for the soil (ibid.) seemingly would be more characteristic of production models followed by conventional agribusiness than small organic farms. Yet the structural embeddedness that affects the care regimes of the Kalniņi production model stretches

even further. In their line of business soil that can *work well* and guarantee good yields is a product on its own account, and Ieva and Jurģis are bound to rely on the care that has been taken of the soil before they apply it in their production process.

Thus, the productionist paradigm of soil management partially frames and paradoxically also contributes to the organic value of the produce to which they allocate the most considerable amount of care in their farm, the microgreens. The used soil has a secondary use-value, as it is discarded on the open pile of compost in the corner of the farm. Thereby the care for the soil and, accordingly, also the plants that benefit from more fertile soil, is transmitted to another much slower parallel temporality, or, as Puig de la Bellacasa would say, there is a 'multiplicity of entangled and involved timelines' (2017: 203) in soil care and ultimately care in general on the farm.

The health of the soil was also addressed as one of the main aspects of organic farming in BioLoģiski seminars (see Chapter Five). As I have described, each seminar began with the same presentation, given by different people each time, culminating in a slide show about the fundamental importance of healthy soil in organic farming. Healthy soil was presented as the ultimate aim and quintessence of the mutuality between different actors involved in the organic farming process: humans, animals, plants and microorganisms. A healthy soil subsequently contributes to a healthier planet. Such soil was seen as a sign and an endorsement that the process of organic farming was being done right.

A paradigmatic shift in soil science towards a more ecological approach has become more visible in the past few decades. In the most recent decade, notions of living soil have become a mainstream approach in soil science. This does not mean that soil scientists have not treated soil as a complex living entity in the past (see Vogt 2007: 11-12), but, as noted by Puig de la Bellacasa, it is only in recent decades that the soil has reinstated its 'right' to be viewed and treated as a living entity beyond productionist discourses where the soil's living quality was seen as a necessary precondition for increasing yields. These days, relations between biophysical and animal entities and soil

'rights' to life have become critical angles of inquiry in soil science (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 169-217).

There is nothing unusual in taking care of the soil as an independent community of living organisms in organic farming science and practices (see Vogt 2007, Puig de la Bellacasa 2017 which has been working within the productionist frameworks. For instance, new spaces of acting can be created through allocating more time for care choosing parallel and overlapping temporalities that, rather than focusing on an increase of productivity, intensify interaction with the soil communities. Thus, intensification as a core aspect of productionist temporalities is changing its linear paradigm to intensification and deepening of the time and care spent engaging with the soil and its qualities (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 197; Vogt 2007: 12).

Ieva and Jurģis' structural dependency on productionist linear temporality is restricting them from allocating enough care time (according to their wishes) for an intimate relationship with the soil in which they grow their produce. The intimacy lacking in this particular stage of production is, however, offset in the care time that is invested in mastering the skills of producing microgreens. In the next subsection, I address the importance of repetition and regularity as essential elements of care time that contribute to improving farming skills.

Mastering micromovements

One day, when the new soil has been delivered and distributed among the seed trays and small plastic boxes – like those seen on so many consumers' kitchen counters, as I mention above – Jurģis heads out to sow a new batch of radish and mustard. Ieva tells me to follow him to observe the speed and dexterity with which he works. She speaks admiringly, admitting she could not do the process half as well.

Jurģis himself is surprised and self-effacing when I arrive at the greenhouse and tell him that I have heard that he is very skilful. He is already in the middle of a task when I ask him to tell me about the process. It is obvious that he is not used to demonstrating his daily work skills and commenting on

them simultaneously, as he sees them as something routine, certainly not special.

Jurģis and Ieva encounter journalists and other public visitors quite often at their farm, however, so it does not take long for him to get into his stride and accompany his work with commentary. As I watch, I see clearly what Ieva meant by highly trained skills, something illustrated mainly by Jurģis' hand movements. His hand opens and crinkly radish and rounded mustard seeds scatter across the flat surface of the soil in the small plastic box. The process is fast; more and more boxes are filled with radish and mustard and piled in towers next to each other. The process seems so simple performed by Jurģis but this is only how it appears. In reality, it might take months and maybe even several seasons until one learns to grab the right amount of seed and perform the correct swaying movement of the hand so that the seeds scatter evenly and do not accumulate on the sides or in cracks in the soil. When I ask how the soil is made so flat, Jurģis demonstrates the technique, pressing a full box onto a freshly filled box to obtain a level surface. The right amount of seed is crucial, according to Jurģis, who says that some of their competitors are over-filling boxes, which creates an unpleasant aroma as rot sets in faster in densely planted boxes. The right density of seed is also necessary for the baby salads grown in the raised wooden planters in the greenhouses because even baby salads can rot very quickly.

It is not unusual on Ieva and Jurģis' farm, with more than 100 different crops, for skills obtained in one type of crop, such as microgreens, to be extended, inter-developed and interchanged with work on others. Singleton and Law argue that the changing circumstances of farming materialities play an essential role in the accumulation through repetition of such everyday caring, as the materiality on the farm is itself heterogeneous (2013: 264). For Jurģis such everyday materialities include plants (in their different stages: seeds, seedlings, partially and fully grown), soil, water and scissors, as well as his hands themselves. The heterogeneous contact between these materialities creates the embodied registers of the intimacy of care work. Thus, the heterogenous spatiotemporalities of care are maintained and continued by reaching out (Tronto 1993: 102) and overcoming the borders between self and otherness (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 96).

After covering the seeds with a very thin layer of soil, the small plastic boxes are stacked on top of each other to instigate the germination process. When the first sprouts start to appear, the boxes are separated and put on wooden tables in places specially designated for growing microgreens. In the winter the process is similar, except that after germination the boxes are placed on wooden tables in a specially built 'sprout house', as it is called on the farm, where artificial lights, heating and humidifiers provide the right growing conditions.

The quality and appearance of microgreens are kept almost the same throughout the year. The only difference between winter and summer is that in the winter a much smaller variety of crops is grown – around 5-6 kinds of microgreens – of which the most popular are pea, sunflower and wheat, followed by radish, broccoli and arugula. When I ask whether they have followed particular principles in building the sprout house, Jurģis answers, 'Not really', but goes on to add that some things should be considered. The interior of the building is all white, for maximum light reflection, and there is a special conditioning system for cold winter weather that prevents temperatures rising much above the optimum for the successful growth of around 20 degrees. In springtime, as the temperature starts to rise outside, it can occasionally reach 28 degrees inside. The solution to minimising the heat is to switch off lamps in turn; ventilation also secures the air circulation as there is no worse thing for microgreens than stagnant air.

Revisiting the process of growing microgreens later during my stay, Jurģis expresses his surprise that so many people find the process of growing microgreens so complicated; many of his clients, for instance, have tried to grow them themselves but have not succeeded so far. Meanwhile, Jurģis and Ieva retain their position as skilled professionals in microgreens growing.

In the next section, I move from the Kalniņi farm to the Saulīši family farm where I spent a week in May 2016. I continue to assess the multiple aspects of farm care by via ethnographic descriptions of sheep husbandry and beekeeping.

Do you care more for sheep or bees?

I step out of the train in a remote town some 80 km from Riga. There is nobody. Those who left the train with me scatter instantly. Some get into the cars that came to pick them up; some head in the direction of the town centre, where most of the apartment buildings are located. I wait. It feels very lonely and empty although the weather is beautiful. Birds sing in the large trees above my head, leaves rustle in the wind. I wait. I have been promised that the family will come and pick me up at the station. It is my first visit to their place, for just a day, to observe life on the farm and talk to family members. I become a bit impatient. What if they have forgotten? Alternatively, perhaps they are so busy on the farm they cannot come. I call Inese. She says her husband is on the way and I briefly describe my appearance. It is a rather funny conversation as there is no need to specify my looks because I am the sole person waiting here.

The smell of dung is in the air. The overall atmosphere of the place reminds me of a small town in which I spent the first six years of my life: the same smell, the same big trees. No trains arrived though. Still, the atmosphere of reminiscence lingers with me for a while.

Finally, a car arrives at the station around 8:30 AM. A quick handshake with Pauls, Inese's husband, and I get into the car. I feel that he is in a hurry. He has just dropped his children off at the village school before coming to get me. As we drive to the farm, we pass a neighbour and stop to pick him up. He has just taken his granddaughters to school. He does this every day, walking several kilometres back and forth. The girls' parents work in the UK, so the children are living with their grandparents. The neighbour gets out of the car at the end of the road to his farm.

Pauls and I ponder the situation of the 'empty' and emptying countryside (Dzenovska 2012a). The phenomenon of emptiness has become a defining characteristic of Latvian rural territories since what is called the 'great emigration' began in Latvia in response to the recession in 2007. Several farms in the Saulīši neighbourhood have been part of this recent phenomenon. A common social arrangement attendant on this emptying is that children have been left with their grandparents. It is

unclear what is going to happen to these farms when the children grow up. Their parents might not return, and it is hard to know whether the children will remain on the grandparents' farms. Will they join their parents in the UK or Ireland? Or will they go to the bigger cities like their peers whose parents are living and working in Latvia?

As we approach, and the outline of the farmstead becomes visible in the distance, Pauls tells me that the so-called 'local' investor who is buying up a solid landmass around their farm actually resides in Morocco or somewhere else far away and warm. The alarming thing for Pauls and Inese is that they do not know who the investor is or what are his plans are. This public discourse about land in the countryside being bought up by foreign investors who are rarely known and never seen has been the currency in Latvia for around a decade. Dzenovska, writing about the fieldsites in her long-term research on the Latvian countryside, notes that in every one of them the people she met told her about surrounding lands owned by 'unknown' foreigners. Such long-distance ownership, according to Dzenovska, contributed to making social and economic relationships in her fieldsites; in most cases, such indirect participation contributed to the intensifying of feelings and experiences of emptiness in the countryside (2012a: 132-133). In Inese and Pauls' case, the worst and most realistic case scenario is that the land will be put under conventional rapeseed. If that happens, it will be an abysmal turnout for their organic bees. The family will have to look for some other home for their hives, away from the threats of pesticides. Foreign investors and landowners in Latvia have been linked with the dominance in large-scale conventional farming of those who have controlled the markets in pesticides and fertilisers since the beginning of the 21st century (Dzenovska 2012b; Tīsenkopfs 199: 421-422).

Others buying up considerable land in the Latvian countryside are neighbouring Lithuanians. Commonly known as good salesmen in Latvia, they are considered impossible to 'beat' by the local farmers. Pauls recalls the time he was talking to local farmers about this and they asked, somewhat discouraged, 'Do you truly believe you could outmatch a Lithuanian?' (*Kas jūs domājat, ka jūs leiti pārsitīsiet*?)

We approach the house at around 9:00 AM. It is located on a road with several more farmsteads. None of them looks particularly lively. There are some cars next to the houses, but no people can be seen. Pauls explains that a family that only comes by at weekends lives in one of the houses. The other is inhabited by a family that consumes a lot of spirits. A dog from one of the houses greets our car with loud, thunder-like barking, following the vehicle for a while as we approach Inese and Pauls' farmstead, which is located on the curve of the road and embraced by 100 to 200-year-old oak trees. The house is what could be called a substantial countryside building — a broad and weighty red brick one-and-a-half storey house placed perpendicularly to the road. On the chimney is another dwelling, rather typical for Latvian countryside – a stork nest, with a stork couple actively inhabiting it. In the yard behind the house where Pauls parks the car, more tall old trees majestically shadow the grounds of the farm and its extensions. Different kinds of birds and animals mainly pets – cats and dogs – bustle in the backyard. The biggest dog, Dille (Dill), greets us as soon as we get out of the car. She looks old and moves rather slowly but carries herself with authority, clearly showing who is the boss here to the other creatures that are roaming around.

The yard appears very well kept, with masterly compositions of greenery and flowerbeds. This stunning welcome presentation is not a surprise as it is commonly seen on farms and around private homes in Latvia. A well-kept and aesthetically attractive garden in the green area around the house is a crucial element in the *saimniecība* (homestead) being recognised as well managed and cared for according to the collective social agreement that is maintained and reproduced in popular agrarian discourse in Latvia (Schwartz 2006).

After my first amusement over the liveliness in the backyard, I head towards the entrance where I am greeted by the *saimniece* (the mistress, hostess), Inese. She appears slightly worried and nervous. I sense a hint of caution as well. To overcome the initial awkwardness, I am invited straight into the kitchen – where there is a neatly set table and the smell of pancakes – and offered tea. Inese is in the middle of pancake baking as we arrive. I notice that several of the bee products made on the farm are on the table, including pollen and honey. I am also offered bee ambrosia

to try. Inese observes that not many consumers know of this bee product, even though it is claimed to be a superfood, packed with all kinds of goodness.

After breakfast, we head outside to look at the farm and take care of urgent errands at the same time. Loaded with a camera, notebook and mobile turned on the recording mode I follow in Pauls and Inese's footsteps, asking them about the saimniecība (farm, homestead). We head to the sheep first. On our way, I am shown a large poultry enclosure that at least three kinds of fowl share with rabbits in cages. When I arrive at the sheep, Paul is busy rearranging the pen in the shed. He enjoys storytelling and I follow his narrative with appreciation. Our conversation flows freely in between the tasks on the ground. Pauls' narrative is occasionally complemented by Inese's when she joins her husband in his duties, while simultaneously carrying on with her work.

I learn that the house was built in the 1850s. A farmhand in earlier times inhabited the smaller building placed at right angles to the main house, which now holds several auxiliary rooms and the honey room. Today one end of the main house is rented out to a neighbouring family. The arrangement is a good one, as the family has been living there for more than 20 years, well before Inese and Pauls had their own family and started to think of moving to the countryside. The house had belonged to Inese's father, who had made the rental agreement with the current neighbours; they eventually became more than just tenants, as they helped take care of the farm after Inese's dad died, a set-up beneficial for both parties. The neighbours had a place to live and plot of land for their own farming needs in exchange for the preparatory and most necessary farm work. The same situation endured even after Inese and Pauls' family moved to the countryside permanently. They say they feel safer and freer to leave for holidays, for example, knowing that there is someone around who will take care of things on the farm if needed.

Their first years on the farm, as in any new arrangement and relationship, were very romantic, but with time, they started to understand what works and what does not. In the beginning, they wanted to try everything. Their livestock began with 12 sheep, now they have 33 as they bought 20 more in the winter. Pauls believes the optimum amount

would be 150 ewes – rams are rarely taken into account, as they almost only raised to be processed into sausages. The most significant need for attention and work lies with their poultry. The family has four different poultry species in their farm – chickens, geese, turkeys and helmeted guineafowl. The latter are particularly vicious and are kept separately from the chickens as they often attack and kill their young. Pauls turned to bees when he was still working in Riga as the work was very stressful and he needed some relaxing activity. In the beginning, there were two bee colonies; today they have 50 and Pauls calculates that it could very well be 100 by the end of the year 2016. It is not, however, Pauls' aim to have as many as possible; rather, he wants to maintain a level that leaves space for love. 'At the end of the day, it is clear you will not become rich by owning 100 bee colonies and 150 ewes', he concludes.

Both Inese and Pauls Saulīši explain that they came to live on the farm in order to follow their own, not other people's principles. Diana Mincyte, in her study of dairy producers in the Lithuanian countryside, also talks about the farmers' wish and even need to demonstrate that they can be owners of their own farming life (Mincyte 2009). A milk farmer, Ona, described by Mincyte, goes even further in her self-acknowledgement as her own governor by not even taking up the financial support offered by the EU (2009: 91), just like Ieva and Jurģis on the Kalniņi farm in my research.

According to Pete Luetchford, who has researched La Verde, an organic food cooperative in Andalusia, similar feelings are expressed by the farmers who are part of that venture. The notions of their own freedom and strong ownership of the land, demonstrated by the labour they invest in it, are actually at odds with the need to be recognised financially and legally.

Clearly, being one's own governor or, as it is said in Latvian, *pats sev saimnieks*, is a common sentiment and stance in terms of the localised empowerment of small organic farmers working in circumstances of 'food sovereignties in between.'[28]According to Aistara, such sovereignties, when

[28] The term 'food sovereignty' is one first used by the social movement, La Via Campesina, which unites hundreds of millions of small famers, landless farmers, women farmers, and underprivileged agricultural workers across the word. The official definition of the term was formulated in the first International Forum for Food Sovereignty in Mali, 2007: 'Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced

practiced in in-between spatiotemporalities (as in Latvian organic farming), are contested and continually shaped by relations with shared collective practices, the ability to co-exist with multispecies care arrangements (my addition on care) and the overcoming of the struggles of different scales (Aistara 2018: 216-218). Although I do not use the framework of food sovereignty in my analysis, I have found Aistara's formulation very useful when addressing and interpreting my ethnographic material.

Returning to Pauls' remark about leaving space for love and not turning into a 'just for profit' or instrumental organic farming enterprise, much like Ieva and Jurģis and other farmers who participated in my research, the desire to make a profit must be put in the perspective. Undoubtedly, none of the participating producers was farming purely for pleasure or self-sustenance; they wanted to promote their businesses and develop new, competitive forms of organic produce and sometimes services. Yet they also always stressed the moral grounds of the work they do. In fact, to them, proper care for the farm and their produce was of equal importance as making a good profit out of it, if only pragmatically, as they knew that without their caring properly for the plants and animals, there would not be an income. Such a perspective leads back to Harbers' observations (see above) that care on farms must be viewed as a complex and living spatiotemporality of economic and loving concerns.

We continue our stroll on the farm and Pauls and Inese tell me that when they came to live on the farm, they had similar romantic feelings and perceptions about life in the countryside to those I am experiencing. They say this has changed, now that they have experienced so much, but to me, they still sound like they are in love with what they are doing. The main reason they chose organic farming methods was that they were very aware of the impact of agricultural chemicals on the soil and plants – consequently also on animals and humans – as Pauls was working in chemical fertilisers sales before switching to organic farming. They wanted to do something quite different,

through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.'

however, mainly for the sake of the future and their children. Inese compares organic farming to a cabbage; as you remove each leaf, you learn something new. Pauls thinks that proper organic farming involves some animal husbandry to secure the full production cycle; another reason to add animals to the farm was that they did not want to buy meat from their neighbours anymore. Yet they did not want to have too big a flock, like Pauls' friend who has 600-700 ewes, as Pauls does not want solely to work.

Caring through playing and getting dirty

Pauls has said in one of our first conversations that sheep are perfect for less industrious farmers as they are not so demanding, like cows or hogs or even goats. Sheep are more forgiving. It is not necessary to wake up while it is still dark to milk them. They do not 'tie you to the home', Pauls concludes. Nevertheless, during my stay, I learned that even sheep, despite being an 'easy' animal, require a certain amount of daily care work. Indeed, they are a constant structuring entity on the Saulīši farm, with their needs keeping all family members on their feet daily. Like other household members, they need to be fed and cared for if unwell; they are taken to separate, remote pastures to avoid unnecessary breeding when they reach a certain age and they are shorn each year at the right time. Moreover, when the rams, for example, reach the point of sale as meat, they are prepared and accompanied to the slaughterhouse. Some of these care acts are one-off, some are performed a few times in a sheep's lifetime, some annually or according to necessity. Most are daily: feeding, watering, checking if there is enough the salt for them to lick, pasturing and of course hugging and playing with them.

The older daughter, Liene (ten years old in 2016), and I become good friends in work and play – which very often overlapped – very soon after my arrival to stay for a longer period. We are made responsible for the daily provision of freshly cut grass and water for the sheep, mainly for those kept in the enclosures, which during my stay are young rams. Pauls usually cuts the grass in one of the small fields in the vicinity of the house either on the previous evening or the same morning; sheep prefer it fresh. After I join Liene on grass provision, I try to earn her trust and bond with her

by inventing a story about *siena zagļi* (hay thieves). This is automatic as I find it an appropriate way to establish relationships when cohabiting with a family on a farm; it takes me back to my childhood, in which all kinds of invented games and stories filled my and my siblings' days when we stayed in the countryside. Now, as an adult performing a farm job with a child, such playfulness feels like a great approach to removing the possibility of regarding daily care work as burdensome or monotonous.

The story starts from a very simple misperception as we cannot find the rakes for collecting the freshly cut grass. I come up with the explanation that the rakes might have been taken by the siena zagļi, very rarely seen creatures that live alongside us and collect hay for building their homes and also themselves, as they pretty much look like small haystacks; I add that they use rakes instead of hands to gather it up. On our first grass collecting trips, I offer only snippets of the story to test whether it might work in establishing rapport, but I soon learn that the siena zagļi are a total success. Sometimes Liene and I are joined by the middle child Miķelis, and he quickly catches up with the tale, which regularly accompanies each of our sheep feeding forays. The story develops each time, as we start imagining what the siena zagļi really look like, where they live, whether they are good or bad. By the final days of my one week stay, the story of the siena zagļi has become rooted in the children's daily routine, with their asking me about them even outside of our daily grass provisioning tasks. Pauls and Inese are also introduced to the tale and occasionally participate with their own additions. It starts to feel like one of the many metanarratives that bind me into the family's everyday life, meanwhile making our daily care activities more meaningful and fun; Liene and I barely notice the passing of time spent collecting the freshly cut hay and taking it to the sheep. After the job is done, it seems like another significant part of the everyday, the hard work feeling like a pleasure and joy (Harbers in Mol et al. 2010: 151).

The sheep, presumably, know nothing of our story as they meet us each morning at the regular spot in the enclosure where we deliver their feed, loudly expressing their joy and squeezing themselves into an outsize ball of wool to get at the tasty smelling treat. Heads, legs and usually bleats emanate from the ball when the tight joint dance around the

feeding station is not going smoothly. Sometimes the strongest rams take charge and chase away the smallest and weakest, so they can eat first; usually, however, they all try to feed simultaneously. When their bellies are more or less full, Liene often enters the enclosure and plays with the rams, chasing, caressing, trying to ride them and talking to them. The daily care of feeding and playing with the animals builds up mutual caring relationships, creating a bond between human and animals; most likely the latter recognise their carers because they feed and spend extended time with them (Singleton and Law 2013: 263). Certainly, this is what I repeatedly heard from Liene, who was sure that the sheep and other animals she tended daily do recognise her.

As well as getting the freshly cut grass, Inese sometimes asks us to check whether there is enough water in all the feeding stations and replenish it, if necessary. Very soon, I learn that taking care of the daily needs of sheep is a very hands-on task; I must be ready to get dirty, as I often need to get very close to the animals, merging with the daily world of sheep to take care of them. Care acts that are based mainly in visual and tactile knowledge and skill production are characteristic of situated farming practices. As Kortright describes his field observations in the C4 Rice Project in Thailand, you need to learn the messiness and you need to become messy to learn and understand (2013: 563). Thus, entanglements of care, as demonstrated throughout my thesis, involve some degree of messiness and fuzziness. Puig de la Bellacasa writes that it is illogical 'to disentangle care from its messy worldliness' (2017: 10). As time passes, I experience several opportunities to encounter the messiness of caring for sheep.

Dancing with sheep

On one of the first days of my stay on the Saulīši farm, Pauls invites me to help him separate the rams from the other sheep as they are at an age where they have started tupping the ewes. Pauls sets up the enclosure where Liene and I will later feed the rams and then it is time to goad all the sheep into the big shed. Pauls is puzzled about why they are not eagerly collaborative today and we decide that they must feel my unfamiliar presence. Eventually, however, we

manage to get them all into the shed, in a process that reminds me of some sort of dance. I learn that if I want the sheep to move according to plan, I need to move along with them. Herding is not just a process of getting animals from location A to location B; it involves the range of bodily (inter)reactions and experiences: the sounds the sheep make are guiding and signalling the overall mood of the herd, while the smell of one's own body and, it seems, even one's inner mood and intentions, need to synchronise with those of the sheep. It certainly feels like a newly acquired skill to fit into the choreography of the process. After the herd is in the shed, I feel overwhelmed, as if I have been able to engage with the sheep, although naturally with Pauls' help as a much more experienced herder. I feel as if the sheep have followed my bodily guidance in going into the shed. On the other hand, I have to wonder whether, instead, it was I who followed the movements of the sheep as we performed our dance.

As well as being a well-known scholar of state and agricultural societies, James Scott has been a sheep owner himself for several decades. He points out that the interrelatedness of human-animal relationships in the constant domestication process is undeniable. Drawing on his own long experience of care for animals, he underscores the need for an open mind, as we approach the question of who domesticates whom (Scott 2011: 198), and, further, who takes care of whom. During Pauls' and my endeavours, three lambs somehow manage to remain outside the shed, which adds a unique sound effect to our task as they all scream for their moms with their unique calls. Our next task is to locate and catch the rams. I am supposed to stand in the doorway, to prevent sheep from escaping. I am also supposed to help spot the rams, as they have yellow tags in their ears. Pauls, meanwhile, grabs them and carries them outside to the new enclosure. Because the gates to the shed are in constant use, my task of guarding them is highly critical. The sheep, who seem to have a slight hope they can somehow outsmart me and escape, huddle around. I do not feel scared or threatened. I stand firm as they squeeze closer to me; their woolly bodies embrace my legs and some warm tongues lick my probably salty shins. It reminds me of being licked by a dog. They are soft and warm. Finally, as the last ram is caught, I unwillingly leave the sheep to continue their

day on their own, as I head to do some tasks inside the home.

The daily rhythms of the farm must also become my rhythms. These rhythms are crucial. Singleton and Law, in their research on cattle tracking in England, found that the repetition of different kinds of everyday activities is closely entwined with, and participates in, defining the *fluid tinkering* of care, as they call it. Moreover, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the repetition goes hand in hand with embodying the caring acts, becoming a skilled carer (Singleton and Law 2013: 264). Thus, caring through the repetitive rhythms of the farm, I wash dishes, help to put the children to bed and clean the kitchen. Often these duties are shared with Inese. Outside the home, Liene and I see that the rams are always fed and well-watered. Every evening I stay up late together with the hosts until almost all the work is done, sometimes heading to bed and leaving Inese and Pauls to finish some pending tasks. We all wake around six or seven and so the days proceed: in the home, on the farm and 'outside'. The outside is the city where Pauls goes to work a few days a week, the far bee pastures, taken care of by Pauls, and the local village, which is visited mainly for shopping and dance rehearsals as all the family are active folk dancers.[29]

On one such afternoon when Inese and the children have left for a rehearsal, I have a rare moment of rest that I use for making some fieldnotes. After a brief stint of peaceful writing, Pauls calls out that the rams have escaped the enclosure, and he needs my help to catch them as they are to be taken to the distant pastures that same evening. I put on my shoes and hurry towards the shed and the pens. As I arrive, I see that Pauls is partially handling the situation, but it does not look secure, as there are several possible 'escape' routes that rams could follow, possibly breaking

[29] The folk dance movement, like the choral singing movement, is a highly structured and ideological activity that, as in the two other Baltic states (Estonia and Lithuania), has been paramount in building and sustaining the nation. The tradition was invented and initiated at the end of the 19th century along with the greater nation building projects across Europe. In practice it has been performed as regular singing and later dancing, which became popular during the Soviet period, in local groups across the country that once every few years expand into nationwide song and dance festivals. The tradition has been referred to public discourse as the 'secret peaceful weapon and charm' of the three Baltic nations throughout the historic turns of past century and half. For more about the phenomenon, see the book by Guntis Smidchens (2014)

into the crops over the road. At the moment they are partially restricted by, on one side, the trailer they are later going to be loaded into, by the shed on the other side and by an apple tree that is serving as a partial restraint. Trying to cover the two most likely runaway routes, Pauls and I clap our hands to guide the sheep back into the enclosure. Once more, I am reminded of dancing. The appropriate use of the herder's own body seems to be crucial in achieving the desired result. The clapping also plays an integral part in attracting the herd's attention and guiding them towards the chosen destination. Yet we realise that the rams have become overly agitated and all kinds of reactions are possible. I feel myself become more tense and alert. Luckily there is one more natural obstacle that limits possible escape: a massive pile of soil from recent construction work. As the timing is critical, and we need to be ready to react fast, I decide to try my luck and climb on top of the pile. For some reason, I have a feeling that it could work, as the sheep might be intimidated by my greater height. Yet it is an instinctive reaction as I feel that I need to *think like a sheep* and show them who is the chief here.

Meanwhile, Pauls has moved closer to the herd, now almost surrounded. We both continue clapping and we get lucky. The leader ram starts running towards the enclosure, and all the others follow. For a moment, I stand astonished on the pile and cannot believe our luck but quickly pull myself together and run after them to make sure all that they all enter the pen. Once more, I feel overwhelmed and, silently, also a bit proud of being able to seize the moment: to act for those we take care of, but that also let us take care of them. Pauls and I cannot stop cheering our good luck and the positive outcome. I also have a feeling that by showing how much I care and how ready I am to become a part of the farms' life while I am there, I have gained a new level of respect from Pauls. I get the same impression later when Inese and the girls are back, and we all are heading out to take the rams to the new pastures when Pauls praises my resourcefulness in front of the family.

Learning about bees

On another occasion, during my one week stay at the farm I am inside the house, doing some cleaning when Pauls

enters to look at the new queens which he purchased yesterday. The small pile of wooden boxes, each with a tiny metal net on the top for oxygen, has been creating a monotonous buzzing soundscape in the parlour for a while now.

Pauls starts telling me about the specifics of beekeeping, beginning with feeding the bees in winter. Very often, the honey that the bees have collected is not enough for them to survive through the winter, mainly because part of it is harvested by beekeepers, but also because, in some situations, rapeseed and heather honey are not suitable for bees to feed on. Although EU law stipulates that supplementary feeding is allowed only in 'long-lasting exceptional weather conditions', [30] ordinarily organic beekeepers in Latvia prepare organic sugar syrup and feed bees throughout the winters, which tend to be long and cold. On the Saulīši farm, they purchase significant amounts of organic sugar that they use not only for making the bee food but also for themselves. When the spring comes, bees may also be fed on the leftovers of the honey harvested from them the previous year, as they need the energy to prepare for summer. Pauls stresses that it is wrong to feed bees with sugar syrup in the summer; it is only for winter.

After this short conversation, Pauls plans to head out to the bees to divide the colonies. To establish a new colony, a queen is needed. Usually, Pauls obtains queens and a couple of workers who take care of the queen from other, bigger bee farmers as he has not yet succeeded in growing queens by himself. It is very meticulous work that requires a lot of patience, he says. They need a great deal of care. The beekeeper needs to check on them every day, perhaps more than once, to see that they have hatched and have food. Queens always need to be organic, though non-organic 'maters' in the colony can account for up to 10%.[31]

The Saulīši bee colonies are distributed in three places during my fieldwork: one is at the edge of the forest and less than a kilometre from the house while two others are placed in neighbouring properties further away, a dispersal largely

[30] COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 889/2008 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/LV/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32008R0889

[31] Ibid.

dictated by the state of the meadows and the availability of pollen carrying plants. Another more worrying and accruing cause is the expansion of conventional rapeseed fields across the region. Small organic farms, like that of the Saulīši family, are increasingly becoming enclosed, disconnected islands and it is hard for bee farms to survive in such a configuration. Farmers need to be industrious and creative to find ways of keeping their bees somewhere safe and secure within the necessary three km harvesting range for bees. Understandably, Pauls wonders how long beekeepers can tolerate such conditions. Another problem has been the thefts of their colonies. Some are stolen to sell to buy alcohol, some to be added to other farmers' colonies; there have also been cases of teenagers vandalising the hives, although not so often lately.

Pauls has been taking care of bees in a moderately relaxed mode for seven to eight years. He recognises that it takes a long time of living with bees, or any of the creatures or plants on the farm, to start knowing them. He is also convinced it is easier to learn the nature of a human than an animal. Humans can at least speak. Pauls' idea is to follow the principles of nature on his farm, which, for him, means that economic activities are not the ultimate object of the way of life. He feels it is sufficient to earn enough to secure an honourable existence, and one should ensure that it does not become all about making a profit. Although essential, money is not the most important thing. Pauls believes that everything on the farm is connected, and his and family's aim is to arrive at a balance with their surroundings and the plants and animals on the farm by trying to understand the needs and requirements of all the actors involved.

Listening to Pauls, I remember conversations with other farmers, as well as the organic educators I have met during my fieldwork who have told me how vital and influential biodynamic farming notions, have been to current organic discourses in Latvia (for more on the historical importance of biodynamic agriculture in Latvia see Chapter Four). The founding concepts of biodynamic farming, initiated by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), are closely connected to anthroposophical ideas whereby nature comprises four dimensions that consist of physical, ethereal, astral and ego forces. Steiner saw the farm as a holistic, living organism, an enclosed and self-sufficient individuality (Vogt 2007: 19). During my fieldwork, Pauls and Inese expressed their

appreciation of the main ideas of the biodynamic approach to farming on a few occasions. Pauls, for example, was convinced that the farm needed to embrace a full farming cycle to be complete. This conviction corresponds with biodynamic notions that farms, as living organisms, need a range of organs to function adequately (see Vogt 2007: 20). Inese also told me about the different biodynamic educational seminars that she has attended which offered a holistic approach towards work and life on the farm. Elements of the almost magical and esoteric promises of the biodynamic approach were present in the excitement Pauls exhibited in his relationships with bees. He said he truly wants to learn about them, to learn how to cohabit on equal terms with these fantastic living beings, although he admitted that a lifetime would probably not be enough.

Extracting the liquid gold

On one of my last days with the family, they tell me that they are about to retrieve the first honey of the season. It is early June, and it seems almost incredible that the bees have already managed to gather enough honey for a collection, yet Pauls and his brother work for a day removing frames from the hives. The next day, Inese, Katrīna – a girl from the nearby town who has been called in to help – and I set to work on what must be done before harvesting the golden liquid from the frames. The room where the process takes place needs to be cleaned several times to reduce the possibility of contamination to the maximum. This is a standard procedure that all beekeepers should follow according to the regulations of the *Pārtikas veterinārais dienests* (PVD – Office of Nutrition and Veterinary). The cleaning intertwined with cooking and eating takes up more than half a day but, by the afternoon, we are finally set to start.

First Inese and Katrīna set up two working stations – deep plastic trays topped with specially designed metal frames on which each comb is placed for the harvesting process. The trays collect the drips of honey that spill out, along with pieces of wax and sometimes dead bees. Daughter Liene is not very sentimental about the bees that become collateral damage in this extraction process, commenting playfully that they will have a free ride on a roundabout. The honey

in the plastic trays will be kept for the use of the family and a few clients who know the farm and specially request this by-product. As Liene comments, 'At the end of the day, this is perfectly good honey.'

In the next stage, Katrīna and Liene work on 'unbuttoning' the honeycombs, which are partially or fully covered with a layer of wax – a sign that the honey is ready to be collected. The two smaller children also express an interest in participating in the process which soon dissipates, leaving them to run in and out, socialising and trying to distract their mother who is preoccupied with the process. They are warned against coming and going so much as the doors should be kept closed when possible. The room needs to maintain a constant level of humidity to secure the proper levels of moisture in the honey – not greater than 18% – something measured with a device called a refractometer. Later, when every freshly filled, 20-litre plastic container is measured, the humidity levels are around 15-16.5%, which Inese says is perfect.

Before the process starts, Inese shows Katrīna how to use a special, very long knife to open the honeycomb. A container of warm water stands nearby, in which the knife is immersed for cleaning. Another tool used on the honeycomb is a metal comb with a wooden handle. The movements with both knife and comb should be light, barely touching the wax, yet also vigorous enough to cut enough into it so that it unravels smoothly as soon as the uncovering has started. It is crucial to feel this balance of lightness and strength in the movement to keep as much honey as possible in the combs. After watching Liene and Katrīna at work for an hour, I feel ready to join in and replace Liene, as there are only two workstations.

As the work proceeds and I observe and participate in the process, I learn that both the older children, who are ten and six during my fieldwork, know a lot about beekeeping and its specifics. They can explain to me in detail why one or another task is performed, and its significance.

After the uncovering process, the frames are weighed; they can be anything from less than 2 kilos to up to 3.7 kilos. Two frames of similar weight are then placed opposite each other in the electric honey extractor, which looks like a big metal tumble dryer with several compartments in which the frames are evenly placed to keep the right balance. Then the

machine is switched on and extraction begins. Very similar mechanical extractors made of wood and run by manpower are still used in smaller farms across Latvia; however, Inese and Pauls decided to invest in the electric one as it substantially eases the process. After several extractions, we realise that it is worth running the tumbling process twice for every batch of frames as less honey is then left in the combs; the second round produces up to an extra 200g.

While we are working, Inese makes a side comment about the frames, telling me that they last up to three seasons. Each time the honey is extracted, and the frames returned to the hives, the bees clean them thoroughly to prepare for the next harvest. After three years, frames wear out and need to be changed.

After the honey has been extracted, the process continues by opening a tap on the bottom part of the metal extraction barrel. To me, the whole process so far has been a magical and amazing experience but that moment when the tap is turned on and the liquid, sweet gold starts pouring into the container placed under it seems the most magical of all. Standing close by, observing the honey slowly pouring out and trying to take the best shot with my camera, I literary feel its smell. It is not just that I can see the thick, golden-brown liquid flowing into the vessel, I can smell it and I can feel its stickiness in the smell. It almost seems that all the essence of the bees' hard work has materialised in this transparent and shiny liquid gold. Inese tells me that this feeling of a miracle being enacted is repeated each season, just as powerfully. Standing there as a human, you feel a deep sense of gratitude and respect towards the amazing insects who work so tirelessly for such long days. It seems you can smell, see and – as the room becomes sticky – almost touch the bees' stories of the journeys they made across the meadows, the plants they visited. This first, unfiltered honey symbolises the bond between the environment, plants, bees and humans in a luscious and barely appropriated form.

At this stage the honey is in a liminal state before it is transformed into the product that will be sold to the clients of TP; it does not belong to the bee world anymore and nor to the human world either. Very soon, however, it is poured through a fine, and then even finer, strainer. Yet Inese tells that even this is not enough to obtain a clear end product,

as long it will be preserved it will gain an almost transparent layer of wax which will float to the surface over the time. However, this first batch is for friends and family members: the most impatient clients, as Inese says. Moreover, they are ready to pay for this 'between worlds' product.

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Experiencing the spatiotemporalities of care on the farms left me with feelings of fulfilment, wholeness and, most importantly, humbleness. That is not to say that the fullness I talk about referenced something finished or perfect; rather it was the result of experimenting, skills-training, adjustment and a wholehearted readiness to care for animals, plants, humans and the surrounding and larger environment. Thus, I fully endorse Harbers' descriptions of the wholeness of care on farms, drawn from his personal experience. Such wholeness, I venture to say, allowed me to observe and experience the most comprehensive spatiotemporalities of care acts in my field.

This observation offers a transition to the next chapter in which I talk about care in distribution, a stage of the reproduction process that is rarely examined and analysed due to scaling and comprehension issues (West 2012: 192). As I explain, West suggests that the problematics of these issues explain the fact that there is a shortage of ethnographic work on logistics in research on food provisioning systems.

I contribute to the study of this neglected phase by observing that TP practice can be conceptualised as a relatively small-scale food provisioning chain. Drawing on ethnographic material collected while taking part in a number of distribution activities carried out by producers, I explore answers to the following questions: What kind of reconnection (referring to the definition of reconnection in Chapter One) processes take place during the distribution stage? Who is re-connected and how; and how do acts of care and not-care become manifest and contribute to these re-connections?

Chapter 9

Patchworked logistics

In the eyes of TP consumers, the food products which are the principal concern of the movement are carriers of primary values, ideals and motivations; they are also a form of communication. Indeed, Zita considered the produce – encompassing layers of producers' care acts – the primary communication tool, the value infused bridge between producers and consumers, something that facilitates the extension of, and at the same time fills the gap between, patchworked entanglements of care in the movement's workings. Dace (one of the key research participants) also appreciated the vital connection between values and produce and felt that friendship should serve as the social glue between the consumer and the food resulting from the entanglements of care on farms. Dace was convinced, if the connection is short and rooted in friendly relationships, the social value and role of the produce were amplified. It was very important to her that she and her family knew the provenance of every product on their table because for her and her family (she hoped) they were more than just food.

In this chapter, I address this materialised form of care work by the movements' participants as an objectified entity that is supposed to 'fill in the distance', both perceived (often imagined, see Chapters Four and Five on a reconnection between the imagined and the lived) and physical, between producers and consumers. I begin by examining how producers overcome the physical distance between their farms and their consumers, and the challenges they face in delivering their produce. In the second part of the chapter, I focus on more imagined distance, represented by adherence to the movement's three central values: organic principles, friendship/friendliness and volunteerism. Through the ethnographic description of the weekly shifts, I return to the discussion presented in Chapter Seven, describing how balancing between perceptions and enactment of the three

values is experienced in the everyday work of the movement.

On a more general level, by critically addressing the means of overcoming, shortening (and sometimes lengthening) or just filling in the distance between producers and consumers, I highlight the importance of the resulting complexity of logistics in the more extensive entanglements of care acts that maintain TP. I also show that they are another expression of the patchworked entanglements of care that are, firstly, characteristic of the movement and, secondly, illustrate its embeddedness in the socioeconomic infrastructure of agricultural and general state politics – including local and global food quality control and solidarity and collaboration in food provisioning.

The chain of logistics in the movement is itself a compilation of continuous processes: harvesting, packaging, delivery, sorting and allocating. The importance of viewing these elements as parts of a single bigger process, despite my highlighting each of them individually, makes visible their crucial role in ensuring that farm yields become produce which is then exchanged. The successful management of the series of stages is paramount in securing the quality as well as the timely physical delivery of the harvest to the distribution points. Time, therefore, vitally defines these processes, mainly as a restrictive and metrical force that shapes the form and content of care acts throughout the whole logistical scheme. Drawing from my ethnographic material, the following sections focus on three central and recurrent themes that reflected how, through the medium of the produce, the movement's participants overcame, mended and filled in the distance between producers and consumers.

Firstly, I look at the produce as such, describing the processes of harvesting and packaging in some detail to show the importance of embodied skills as well as the different aspects of time involved: mainly rhythms and tempo. Both embodied skills and time were critical in 'the making of produce' from something grown or raised in the fields into something that is 'thrown into' the ensuing continuity of time as 'produce in becoming', to be delivered to the consumers' tables in its final form of food ready for consumption.

Secondly, I talk about overcoming the logistical obstacles along this route, starting with the delivery stage, with

farmers having to handle the challenging conditions of Latvia's poor roads when commuting between the countryside and the city. Here I highlight the absence of infrastructural care (by the state), juxtaposing it with the farmers' creative care strategies which contributed to managing time by engaging with the changing and adjusting rhythms and tempo of the delivery process (described below).

Finally, I turn to the last stage of the distribution process, which involves the physical meeting of producers and consumers during the weekly sorting and allocation shifts, and the ensuing exchange of the produce for cash (collected at the next delivery). Spatiotemporally, the exchange can be seen as overcoming distance on several levels: between producers and consumers, country and city and also consumers themselves in the intimacy of their branches. Conceptualising the voluntary work shifts as manifestations of *disciplined* and *disciplining care* – shaped by the compilation of rules, specific rhythms, self-organisation and different levels of (dis)trust (Grasseni 2013: 129) – I examine the issue of whether care can be expressed as discipline. Further, can such disciplining and disciplined care be affectionate or is it, rather, instrumental and rational? Does disciplining and disciplined care contribute to the continuation, maintenance and repair of the movement, and, if so, how? As I mention above, I link these inquiries to the discussion that I started in previous chapters on the importance of friendship and volunteerism in the movement.

The complex and manifold logistical stages that guarantee the quality of the produce and its delivery to the consumer in the best possible condition are not much discussed in the abundant research on food supply chains across the world. Paige West suggests that there at least three reasons why the topic is among the least researched aspects in the anthropology and cultural geography of supply chains. Firstly, she argues, this is not the most 'attractive' element as it involves various means of transport, storage facilities and the dirty work of packing, delivery and sorting: processes whose access is usually closed to the general public, including researchers, for reasons of health and safety. Secondly, as with facilities and transport, the people who are involved in the logistics can be unapproachable and too busy for meetings as they work in conditions of high

responsibility and stress. Finally, West argues that the scope of the distribution process is often too broad and far-reaching spatiotemporally. Thus, an ethnography covering all the stages is a challenging task likely to result in a somewhat journalistic approach rather than comprising long-term, profound observation followed by an in-depth description (2012: 195).

Luckily, due to TP's relative smallness, it was possible to overcome some of the obstacles West describes. My positionality, emplaced in both producing and consuming environments, gave me the chance to follow and participate in every stage of distribution, with continual access to the persons and facilities involved. While I do not claim that the following ethnographic description provides a complete picture, it offers a pared-back participant observer's interpretation of the stages, enabling the delineation of vital aspects of another patchwork of (re)connection through care, and a greater understanding of the recurring themes of embodied skills, time, infrastructure, materialities and discipline.

In what follows, I provide a detailed ethnographic description of harvesting and delivery processes. I begin with the harvest on the Kalniņi farm, underlining the importance and finesse of embodied skills and knowledge of materiality of produce. The delivery process is then assessed through a description of a delivery trip to Riga that also included deliveries to the city's TP branches. The narrative unfolds through the medium of conversations on the road and my observations of the trip.

Harvesting

As in production, in harvesting, the embodied skills of caring about the produce were of the utmost importance. The delicate act of making a separation between a plant (crop) that is growing and being nurtured in its designated spatiotemporality, and the produce in its initial raw stage, requires embodied skills and knowledge that is acquired in practice. The fragility of the produce and the precise handling required in transition are even more significant in organic farming. The short-lived and highly perishable quality of produce that has not been exposed to pesticides

and other transformative farming practices common in conventional farming requires all the carer's skills to overcome; it is particularly dependent on the knowledge and ability to manage time and apply the right techniques of handling and preserving. The rest relies on the resistance and strength of the plant's genetic makeup and potential *force majeure*, including poor weather and constant and unpredictable ruptures on the delivery routes.

I joined the harvesting stage when staying on the Kalniņi farm, the first step in the logistics of distribution, helping to pick radishes which, along with other produce, would be delivered to a few regional branches in the nearby town. Only later I came to realise that harvesting was 'valued' as a slightly more advanced task in production than, for instance, weeding, which I had been doing since my arrival at the farm. There was also an unspoken yet practically established difference between harvesting radish or kale and cutting salads, which was probably considered one of the most advanced tasks.

Jurģis and I walk together to the greenhouses and he gives me some brief instructions about the size of the bunches (optimally ten radishes), the picking process and how excess soil is removed by lightly tapping each bunch on the wooden edge of the growing box. Deft hands and nimble fingers are of the utmost importance when tying the bunches with a rubber band, and I become aware of the high probability of damaging some of the produce. The feelings are amplified by being exposed to the daily concerns of how hard July is for the family on the farm (more on production seasonality and logistics in the following sections).

After neat bunches of radishes are piled into the boxes, we continue to the fields to collect the kale. While plucking the green, succulent leaves, Jurģis draws my attention to how fast they become soft in warm weather – and it is around +30C that week. Consequently, if harvesting must be performed in the middle of the day in such conditions, the best way to keep the produce fresh is to shower it generously, although the best time for harvesting vegetables in warm conditions is in the late evening, night or early morning. As we proceed, Jurģis ponders on the unpredictability of harvests. He admits he can never be sure whether there will be enough quality kale, for instance. All the deliveries need to be foreseen a week in advance,

sometimes two or even a month, which is one of the most challenging tasks in growing vegetable crops, he claims.

Another critical issue is securing the freshness of the produce. Jurģis has learned that 'fresh' can have different meanings for the farmers themselves and consumers; it can be also different for TP consumers and those who buy from supermarkets. Jurgis thinks that farmers can be the pickiest in this regard, as to them fresh is something that is just picked and eaten soon afterwards, preferably in the next few hours or on the same day. The clients will be happy with the freshness of produce that has been gathered the previous evening or the same morning, while supermarket salad that has been brought, for example, from France or Italy can likely remain 'fresh' for several weeks, Jurģis concludes. An example of distinctly different perceptions of what is fresh or not is highlighted in a short encounter with Jurģis and Ieva's daughter, Dina.

One day after harvest I am snacking on a so-called *waste* batch of arugula, which is partially damaged and will rot quickly. It has been put on the bench next to the house (in the hope that at least part of it could be processed as ready to use in smoothies). Dina approaches me and asks why I eat the old (*vecie*) salad. I respond without thinking that the salad is not old, that it is still perfectly suitable for eating. It is just that it is not suitable for delivering to clients. To prolong freshness, Jurģis has developed the technique of cutting significant amounts of salad, which is prepacked and taken to a friend's cooling facilities where it remains until being picked up before a delivery trip. This way, it is possible to save some of the harvests if it has grown too fast in warm weather, provided it has not developed signs of deterioration which cannot be helped by quick preservation.

The harvesting, sorting and packaging of salads can be considered one of the most skilled tasks on the farm, like seeding. Both require a certain amount of embodied knowledge and skills as well as an understanding of the growing conditions that affect the quality of the product over time. Delicate leaf crops such as salads are also one of the produce items exposed to high levels of damage. As my experience on the farm accumulates, however, the time for me to see and take part in the salad harvest arrives, and the day before a Riga delivery trip, I follow Jurģis to the

greenhouses to collect the baby lettuces. After cutting they will be arranged in specially partitioned boxes bought from tulip growers and reused. Each box is lined with a fitted plastic bag in which the leaves are collected for taking to the fridge the same evening.

Jurģis inspects growth before cutting. He is harsh in his judgement that quite a big part has been sun-damaged while another big chunk is rotten. After this assessment, he fetches two pairs of shears and demonstrates how to hold them and make cuts. As with the other tasks I have observed him performing, he moves fast and with seamless confidence. Grass cutting shears are used, as Jurģis says those have proved the best. Compared to Jurģis, I do not feel confident at all, a feeling of inferiority that grows as I see how easy and smooth he makes the task seem; in contrast, I feel slightly clumsy and nervous. Every move needs to be careful, with no space for mistakes and even less for damage. Yet Jurģis does not let me feel frightened for long, taking a work-driven and straightforward stance and briefly explaining both basics and critical details of cutting. Firstly, I need to be aware that the plants are growing in lines, which is supposed to ease the cutting process. Secondly, the plants should be cut quite close to the soil, yet not too close, to obtain the maximum amount of vegetation without collecting soil and unnecessarily dirtying the leaves. Jurģis watches my attempts for a short time and then leaves me alone, heading for another part of the greenhouse to cut another batch. I continue alone, occasionally snacking on the trimmings, and soon the cut lettuces start piling up in the box, which is propped up in a vertical position. Jurģis makes sure that I do not stack them too densely or too sparsely. After the job is finished, he shows me how to order the freshly cut salads in the boxes, before moving on to weighing and packaging. Finally, we water them generously and leave them alone for a while.

In the next two sections, I discuss methods of time management used to prolong the shelf life of the produce in transition. The following ethnographic material shows that a considerable amount of creativity, instant innovation and negotiation is required, thus also an ability to adjust one's skills, which becomes a skill in itself.

Filling the gaps in disruptive infrastructures

As the second week of my stay on the farm begins, Jurģis and I head to Riga for one of the weekly delivery trips. The air is sultry. A thunderstorm is forecast for the evening which will be a relief as the last four days have been sweltering, with a midday heat of +30C; it has been impossible to work in the fields during the day. Greenhouses have also become impossible work zones due to the heat. Such conditions are awful for baby salads and microgreens as many of them dry out or even burn; a batch of salads and spinach has also spoiled. We finish loading the van and begin our trip around 8 am; a ride that starts loud and bumpy. The road that leads from the farm to the main road is in a pitiful condition, exemplifying the prevailing discourse of poor Latvian roads. Talking is hard over the noise the van makes as it manoeuvres between holes and bumps in the forest road.

Harvey and Knox (2015), discussing roads and infrastructure in the Peruvian Andes, observe that the main problem of anthropology has changed since the 'times' of, for instance, Levi-Strauss (circa the 1960s). Today's anthropologists, they say, are no longer trying to understand the continuity of systematic cultural entities; rather, they – and social scientists in general – aim to capture and illuminate the 'dynamics of the process of change'. While still upholding the traditional anthropological focus on cultural differences, social relations and identity questions, this change in perspective has opened less known research avenues to anthropologists examining infrastructure. As Harvey and Knox suggest, these must harmonise with, and not compromise, anthropology's existing and well established methodological and analytical approaches, such as description and scale. By drawing on the example of their work contextualising the Andean village of Ocongate, the authors suggest that such a challenge can be faced by looking at both places and practices, meanwhile regarding roads as the markers and carriers of change, as well as the materialisation of a specific attitude to infrastructure – in their study, that of the state (2015: 1-3).

In the case of TP, the roads used to deliver produce from the farms to consumers are elements of state-provided

infrastructure. Roads play an essential role in understanding different levels of care between producers and consumers, as well as what could be conceptualised as not-care between state and producers; the latter is a materialisation of state politics (Harvey and Knox 2015: 5) experienced during the everyday use of the roads by producers who must deliver their produce to consumers. In everyday discourse, Latvia's poor roads are considered one of the main signifiers of a meagre and disrespectful state[32] attitude towards its citizens (Sedlenieks 2012: 109). For the last 25 years, since the state has regained its independence, its development and presence in the lives of the nation have been seen through the infrastructure of roads (Scott 2009). As with Peru (Harvey and Knox 2015), in Latvia during the past quarter-century the condition of the roads has been perceived as a sign of the state's short-term politics, a discontinuity in national and regional development and the theft of a better future for those wholly dependent on this critical infrastructure (Harvey and Knox 2015: 21; Dzenovska 2012: 152; Sedlenieks 2012: 97; Šūmane 2010: 70).

In this dissertation, I do not address the perceived and experienced realities of contemporary roads in Latvia in the manner of Harvey and Knox. Rather, I am interested in the dynamics operating between the 'unsmoothness' of the infrastructure – represented by the poorly maintained road system and the strategically important routes of the producers in my research – and the social relations that are built and sustained concerning the unfavourable circumstances the infrastructure introduces. I am particularly interested in how these dynamics contribute to the processes of reconnecting country and city, and producers and consumers, which are the primary concern of the present chapter.

Following Harvey and Knox, it could be said that the social change represented by TP is taking place despite the status quo, indeed, the decline and chaotic maintenance of the infrastructure provided by the state. As several producers

[32] My conceptualisation of 'state' in this work is largely informed by the writings of Foucault, seeing it as an abstract ruling apparatus that embodies the essence of governmentality, surveillance and control as well as the provision of services that are designed to secure its own continuity. I do not engage with relatively recent discussions (e.g., Trouillot 2001) which question the conceptualisation of the state as such in anthropological research.

explained, the poor roads were perceived as an inevitable source of additional loss in the annual process of production. Both Jurģis and Ieva and Inese and Pauls counted on the shortened life span of their vehicles and the increased maintenance measures they required compared to city dwellers. Thus, as noted by Harvey and Knox (*pace* Star and Ruhleder [1996]), local infrastructure is deeply relational (2015: 6). This is an observation that applicable to maintaining TP, whose 'invisible [or perhaps visible] trouble'[33] lies in the state's fragmented and unsatisfactory capacity to provide that extra layer it is supposed to supply to the care that producers currently devote to maintaining the quality of their produce and their ongoing relationships with consumers. Thelen and Read (2007) attribute such fragmented state care in post-socialist spaces to the *withdrawal of the state*. This has meant that people, indoctrinated into relying on the overarching state paternalism of the socialist system, have been 'thrown' into the abyss of transition, where they must try to cope by relying more strongly than ever on personal care structures and networks (Thelen and Read 2007: 8-9). While improving road infrastructure is largely beyond the scope of self-help, [34] extra care, attendant on the state's inadequacies, has been expended on maintaining the movement; extra energy, time and money have been put into sustaining the quality of the produce despite infrastructural obstacles, and willingness shown to connect with consumers by choosing the door-to-door delivery model. Such care adds a higher value to both the produce and the relationships maintained under greater pressure and levels of responsibility.

On the road to reconnection by handling time and relationships

Back in the van, as the delivery trip to Riga proceeds, I learn that Jurģis, while accustomed to the jolting caused by the

[33] According to Lampland and Star (2009) the 'invisible trouble' is internal to infrastructural systems and exposes the vulnerability of their multitiered actor involvements and circumstances (Harvey and Knox 2015: 6).

[34] Ieva and Jurģis have set up a private initiative to organise the construction of a road (several hundred meters) to their home, considered a private road as it runs across their property.

bumpy countryside roads during his regular commutes, might be less used to someone accompanying him on delivery trips. Possibly to avoid any awkward moments of silence, he imparts as much information as possible during our trip. As with every Monday, we will be visiting several TP branches but, before heading to Riga, we drive to the farm where Jurģis' friend stores his freshly cut salads in industrial fridges, thus increasing the shelf life of his produce a little. The farm where the fridges are located is a similar enterprise, but its produce now goes to restaurants. Jurģis tells me that a while ago he and his friend were business partners, selling produce and forest mushrooms and berries in the *nakts tirgus*, a night market in Riga's central market where people come to buy produce directly from farmers at a 'seemingly' cheaper price.[35] Those were tough times. There were weeks when he only managed about eight hours of sleep although he was often driving a car laden with produce. He admits that work conditions were hazardous, both to him and other drivers, and he decided to quit for that reason. His final wake-up call came when his partner called him to come and help with packaging when he was in the hospital with Ieva as she delivered their third child. It is to this man's farm we are going now as they have continued to collaborate; the Latvian market is rather small.

As soon as we arrive, we start repacking the salads in bags and sealing them with stickers designating each bag's contents and also carrying the farm's logo – crucial for branding. The repacking is an additional activity, as those salads meant for today's delivery were found to be spoiled late yesterday. New lettuces were picked and delivered to the fridge in the evening to be packed today; Jurģis quickly picks out and disposes of some heat-affected leaves among them. As we work, he pictures how much more efficient their business would be if they had such a fridge on their farm; not only salads but also microgreens would benefit, as they could be refrigerated between when they become ready and delivery, which can sometimes be more than a day. He explains that baby salads and microgreens cannot be left unattended after they are ready to harvest, as their

[35] Initially *nakts tirgus* was intended for people yearning to buy directly from local farmers at affordable prices. Lately this practice has been criticised and devalued by 'ethical' and 'alternative' urban consumers, as it has emerged that this 'local' produce is in reality a conventional produce from Poland, bought by local producers and sold as their own.

leaves might become yellow and they can start to spoil. So, to prevent considerable waste, the right timing is essential, as well as the capacity to stop or extend 'shelf life' with the help of refrigeration. Another option would be to invest in a delivery van with a cold compartment. Temperature is one of the biggest enemies of fresh salads, which can rot and begin to ferment after two hours of heat and sun exposure. Overall, bagged up baby salads are delicate and capricious products, which is why they are not offered to organic shops, for example.

The right timing is paramount at every stage of production and distribution on Jurģis and Ieva's farm, which, according to Jurģis, explains their business strategy of working in so-called 'in-between times' when their specialities, such as microgreens, come into their own. It is almost impossible to compete by offering the same produce as everybody offers in the tough summer period, so the budget is planned according to their winter and spring income, times when the farm profits. Moneywise, July is probably is the hardest month for Jurģis and Ieva, when they really need their savings; this July, for instance, they will manage to pay their workers and the bills. That is it; although even that will be the sign of a good July. The spoiled salads the day before our delivery trip represented a 200-euro loss, which, if sustained every week, might amount to as much as 1,000 euros lost monthly, a sum that is almost two workers' salaries. Yet Jurģis concludes that the situation is not so bad, not only because they (barely) survive now, but also because they constantly think and calculate.

Timing is also critical on another level. During our delivery trip, Jurģis receives quite a several phone calls from people wanting to know when he will be arriving in one or another designated place. For example, there are TP branches outside Riga that pick up their produce halfway, so that Jurģis does not need to drive the whole way to a town that maybe some 20km from the city, yet delivery times, especially for individual consumers, are only approximate. People want to double-check as deliveries must be synchronised according to schedule. Each delay, for whatever reason, can affect the whole complicated network of delivery routes. Time and precise planning are even more critical in the winter when it is essential that the person receiving the produce be available straight away so Jurģis

does not need to stand around in temperatures of -15C. Jurģis also calls some clients five to fifteen minutes in advance of his arrival, meanwhile receiving frequent calls from Ieva, who is trying to manage his routes, adding some pick-ups or dealing with other practicalities.

One of the most significant issues to complicate and jeopardise a smooth delivery process is the lack or inadequacy of communication between producers and consumers, mainly the case with individual clients who are not participants in TP. However, as both kinds of deliveries take place on the same day, recurring problems of this nature can seriously affect arranged delivery schedules involving TP branches. As the latter have specially designated periods for receiving farm produce, there is rather little flexibility, as the spatial disposition of each delivery spot plays a crucial role in managing a well-functioning delivery route. Thus, finding and negotiating a suitable time for both sides is decisive for collaboration between producer and consumer. Often compromises are required, and arrangements might be highly creative: orders may be left at a friend's place or other designated spot, without meeting the client in person. The same applies to payment which can be picked up from a friend or arranged through bank transfer.

During the packing process back in the storing facility, I notice that the latest bags seem 'fatter' than previous ones and Jurģis suggests that the salads have not yet settled. The appearance of the packages might vary during the packaging and delivery process. We do not use scales to ensure that weight is exact; rather, we trust our eyes and hands, which get used to judging the optimal weight of each bag, which should be around 70g. It is often hard for the consumer to grasp such a weight; in numbers, it can seem like a tiny quantity. More important is a bag's appearance, which should look like the desired amount to the consumer. Some can look as if they weigh 150g, while Jurģis remembers that Sanita (the seasonal worker at the farm, neighbour and also a distant relative of Jurģis) once packed the salads like IKEA furniture, very compactly. Of course, the bags looked small and not very appealing, he adds. We also pack other salads that might serve as replacements should something get spoiled on the way, or which can be sold as extras. Often, Jurģis leaves the leftovers at the last drop-off point, an organic shop, collecting the money next

time.

The conversation as we work repeatedly returns to the importance and type of relationships that develop among producers/providers and their consumers. Jurģis finds it surprising that many TP consumers probably would not even recognise Ieva, as he is the face of their produce because he delivers it regularly. Nevertheless, the clients are very friendly with Ieva in their online communications via email and Facebook. Jurģis admits he does not know his TP clients very well as he usually meets them only as someone on duty. It is only when they order microgreens that they sometimes chat, and he gets to know them better. He is more familiar with his private clients but even then, his contact with them is only about two minutes per delivery. Thus, his wife Ieva, who maintains communication on Facebook and Twitter, knows the clients better while Jurģis concludes that his role is to maintain their professional relationships.

While the limited time of encounter and ultimate reconnection between producers and consumers in the spatiotemporalities of shifts can be viewed as too short, as I will discuss later, it is a rhythmical and disciplining part of the relations within the logistics scheme as a whole. The interactions between the groups that I observed in many shifts were, as Jurģis would say, professional with a hint of friendliness, especially when producers were long-standing TP suppliers who had been working to make their image recognised and acknowledged even beyond the movement.

In every district of Riga, we try to cover the TP branches in the most efficient way in terms of their proximity. Before almost every delivery to a sorting point, we also doublecheck its current condition. As time passes it declines. Sometimes it happens shockingly fast. In such cases, we exchange the spoiled produce with the new pre-prepared replacements. It is 13:00 when we arrive at the first TP delivery spot, a tea shop. Very often the money is handed out by the staff in such cases, as in some groups there are no so-called receiving persons on duty. We briefly exchange our impressions of the location, which seems a charming, alternative, almost underground cafe. As we drive on, Jurģis returns to the issue of roads and transportation and the high importance of both in his work. During my fieldwork, the family has two cars, this van for

deliveries and a car for family needs. With four children, domestic logistics can also be quite complicated at times. Besides, the car – despite the deplorable condition of the roads leading to their home – is the only means for the family to get around, as the closest bus stop is some 2km away. The worst-case scenario is for a vehicle packed with produce to the value of 1,000 euros, for example, to break down. In winter the produce spoils in two hours due to outside temperatures. Thus, transport in their line of business is of the utmost importance.

The next place, located nearby, is described by Jurģis as rather shabby. As we arrive, we enter a shadowy backroom in an old wooden building with barely any empty table space; boxes from repeated deliveries are collected on every possible surface. Two women greet us, and the interaction is very businesslike. The produce is accounted for and checked, Jurģis receives and counts the money for the previous delivery and we make our departure. At the next destination, the person on duty is on the phone to a producer who has given two different prices for the same produce. We wait until the conversation ends and she turns to attend to us. Usually, the delivery is checked in silence or a business-like tone of voice and, as I have pointed out, no visible signs of friendship or even, sometimes, friendliness are exhibited.

By the second half of the day, as our trip is coming to an end, we both realise how hungry we are and decide to stop at the McDonald's drive-through on our way back. Food breaks are brief or skipped altogether during the delivery trips, frequently resulting in falling back on fast food. In the past Jurģis needed to be home by a set time to collect the children from kindergarten and half an hour might be lost by eating properly. Thus, time also affects farmers' everyday food practices as often work is prioritised over healthy food choices, as I was also told by those strongly affected by the seasonal character of their farming practices, such as goat or sheep farmers. Food choices also fluctuate depending on who and how many are involved in a particular eating event. Thus, Jurģis will go for a fast and presumably unhealthy choice while on delivery duty, but he admits it never happens if all the family is travelling with him, which sometimes happens. Mainly for the sake of children they then select a healthier option.

We arrive back at the farm around 18:00 and have a bite of the food Ieva has prepared today. Later, as the evening sets in, Ieva and Jurģis discuss today's delivery trip. They are pondering whether or not to offer vegetables to TP as they will be ready to start harvesting any day soon. As it would be a hopeless project to try to weigh and label them separately, Jurģis suggests offering fixed amounts such as half a kilo or a kilo.

I ask if Ieva thinks that their impatience and desire for quick results can be blamed on their success with microgreens. She returns to one of the recurring discussions that take place during my stay, about quitting collaboration with TP entirely and switching to a monoculture that they could sell wholesale. Even though Ieva and Jurģis repeat that TP is not an essential player in their business endeavours, it seems that it is an entity that is taken into account, considered and continuously reconsidered in their deliberations on their future.

Shifts

It could be said that the whole existence and continuity of the movement is based on the weekly shifts that are carried out voluntarily. Like many caring acts of maintenance, continuation and repair the smooth running of the weekly shifts secures the smooth running of the movement itself. As I mentioned in Chapter Seven, 'volunteerism' translates as the time that is devoted by the participants of the branches to sorting and allocating the produce. In its ideal form, such time attains the status of a gift that can create and reproduce reciprocal relationships (Grasseni 2012: 28), as well as the values of the movement. On the level of practice, I observed that the time that was invested in the care work performed at the weekly shifts in the regional branches and by producers delivering the goods created a complex entanglement of reciprocity as well as one-directional and self-contained acts of giving or receiving.

Volunteering as a person on duty involves the contribution of one's time and skills and a willingness to commit to a greater good, the good of the community which, at the local level, encompasses the branch to which one belongs and on the general level, the whole movement. The definition of

this calling is clear and supposedly works as a powerful motivator for participants in the movement. However, during my fieldwork I often observed reoccurring problems on the level of local branches indicating that the system was stumbling; people needed regular encouragement and even disciplinary action from the local leaders to secure the regularity of the shifts and the smooth functioning of the movement. In this section, I outline the main operations of each shift and the actions required in the sorting and allocation processes, the final stages in the care chain and logistics of distribution.

There were three types of shift work, comprising, respectively, a weekly production communicator, sorters and people responsible for allocating the produce to consumers; all three tasks required both commitment and skill. Those on duty had to be ready to contribute a certain amount of time every three months to performing the shifts and the necessary skills involved the ability to handle several tasks at once, as the delivery process and final sorting could often be hasty and chaotic. They must also learn to be patient and be ready to improvise, though only on the fringes of a particular set of rules, as I detail below.

Ultimately, each of the shifts attracted a particular kind of participant. Firstly, as I write elsewhere, they were mostly undertaken by female members; however, there were some slight variations between the three shifts in the type of volunteer due to the tasks each involved. The first type comprised extensive communication with the producers (mainly by calling them on the phone, see also my initial attempts to communicate with farmers on the phone and its challenges in Chapter Three) while adjusting the weekly produce orders. Because this supposed free time during working hours, it was most often preferred by stay-at-home mothers with babies or toddlers. Yet it was interesting that on the movement's internet site, the task was advertised as easy to fit into an office working day and, in the video advertisement, it was performed by a young woman office worker and presented as fully compatible with everyday employment duties. In practice, however, it was mainly the province of stay-at-home mothers, whose mobility was restricted because they felt their children were too small to be left with someone or taken with them to either of the other two shifts. The communication shift also had one of the most stable and predictable groups of people on rotating

duty, who rarely required extra encouragement or discipline.

The two other shifts, however, were subject to regular stressful and conflictive encounters between the 'leaders' and regular participants. In all the branches in which I took part, attended regularly and whose activities I followed through email correspondence and Facebook groups, the shortage of one or another person on duty for sorting or allocation shifts was characteristic and probably one of the most regular topics of weekly communication among participants. Regular expressions of disappointment and despair, with occasional threats from the local 'leaders', met a marked shortage of enthusiastic response and offers to step in at once when called upon. As a result, regular drilling on the importance of duty was apportioned every month or two. In the branch of which I was a member for several months, the commonly formulated and the distributed rule was that everyone who is a regular consumer in the movement (meaning those who order weekly) is supposed to do eight shifts yearly. Divided quarterly this means around two shifts each two to three months.

Depending on the branch, the sorting shift usually required volunteers to allocate their time from around 13:00 to17:00 on Mondays (the delivery and distribution days varied in the regional branches); as this was during working hours, it was probably the most contested. Often it was covered by stay-at-home mothers who managed to find someone to care for their children for an afternoon every month or two, although it was not unusual for working women to take a day or half a day off to do the shift. It was seldom done by the rare male volunteers. This shift, the sole and regular direct encounter with producers, involved the collection, verification and sorting of delivered goods into large baskets or shopping bags (different in each branch), each of which had an identifying number matching a consumer. A certain number of these were purchased as each branch was established according to the estimated number of future members.

The third shift in the distribution stage, often called the evening shift – usually lasting from 17:00 to 21:00, although this also varied slightly in each branch – had the greatest gender equality of the three. During my fieldwork, I quite regularly encountered male volunteers for this shift.

Like the sorting or day shift, the evening shift was typically shared between two people to lighten the duties and allow the shifts to go more smoothly. The volunteers changed weekly, working in either random or arranged pairings – the latter when people had become friends through the movement or joined it as friends (see the case described in Chapter Seven). Often people who took up these later shifts were newcomers, like me (see the following section); for this reason and because shifts were performed relatively rarely and the list of duties was regularly adjusted, it was crucial that, in addition to the written rules available to every participant as a Word and sometimes Excel file, at least one of the persons on duty was knowledgeable and experienced.

The primary duties of the evening shift involved handing over the sorted produce to consumers arriving after work and collecting payment. After it was over, the takings were counted and sorted into respective envelopes for each producer to ensure they would always receive payment for their deliveries the following week. This inconvenienced producers who would have to stop by the branch even if they did not have any orders from it if they wanted to pick up their money. However, the standard practice to reduce costs was to let the money wait until their next delivery.

In the final section, I ground my analysis in detailed overviews of the shifts. My descriptions as both observer and participant during fieldwork demonstrate that the care acts that defined the shifts in question could be viewed as *disciplining* and *disciplined* on the normative and enacted (embodied) level, thereby securing better care and, ideally, the continuity of the movement.

Extending self-care through discipline

Pairing care with discipline is probably not the most appealing union that comes to mind when one thinks of care, a repugnance rooted in the historically derived placement of care on the margins of thought and practice (discussed in detail in Chapters Two and Six). The normalised coupling of care with loving, intimate nurture has prevailed in popular discourses (although critically challenged by feminist scholars), while discipline,

although possibly not antithetical to affection, is not associated with the warmth of intimate nurture and is mainly coupled with institutionalised manifestations and emplacement in the military services, prisons, hospitals and schools (Goffman 1961; Fuko 2001; Uusihakala 2015). Nevertheless, it is also clear that the discipline in such institutions could not be dispensed without a certain amount of care; or, rather, the caring through discipline in such institutions refers to the care regimes. Such regimes are subject to the strictures of spatial and temporal preconditions, as frequently the disciplining care is carried out in spatially enclosed and contained physical formations and according to strict repetitive rhythms (Foucault 1997: 149 and 141-146; Goffman 1961: 4).

While I cannot claim that the organisation of shifts in the movement could be perceived in the form suggested by Foucault or Goffman, nevertheless it certainly possessed some of the attributes of forms of disciplinary social organisation: the physical activities of the work and their disciplining were contained in assigned and enclosed physical spaces and the strict temporal rhythms of each task were paramount in maintaining the intensity of the caring ethic in the overall work organisation among participants (analysed below).

On the other hand, a seemingly opposing characteristic of the practice of care that has been highlighted in recent research is elaborated by Puig de la Bellacasa, who argues that care is messy, affective, unpredictable and hard to grasp as it is to some extent intertwined with living and life itself (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; see also Graeber 2018). On the face of it, such care does not appear compatible with the requirements of institutionalised discipline whereby the execution of power is framed by rules and regular and repetitious compliance with them: an arrangement which characterised TP shifts. In the following analysis of the sorting and allocation shifts, however, I show that the disciplinary and messy sides of care did cohabit and, in fact, reinforced each other, securing the smooth operation of the work. To support this suggestion, I employ Foucault's (1977) thorough work on the concept of *docile bodies* – to which I do not claim to add a significant contribution in this short section – combining it with his ideas on self-care (Fornet-Betancourt et al. 1988). Finally, I refer to the article by

Lucy Jarosz (2011) in which she applies Foucault's ethics of self-care while analysing farming women in the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project in Washington State (USA).

Jarosz applies Foucault's somewhat abstract and philosophical understanding of self-care, which she interprets as liberty when examining the motivations of small-scale women farmers in the CSA project. She demonstrates that Foucault's self-care corresponds closely with the main ideas of ethics of care, developed in feminist research and culminating in the work of Joan Tronto. Jarosz points out that Foucault's ethics of self-care are neither inward-looking nor selfish. As human liberty – a quality that, as Foucault stresses, dates back to the writings on ethics in Ancient Greece – self-care has to do with caring about others and the environment that one inhabits through the proper caring for the self. Self-care is paramount in fitting into and conforming with space and community one inhabits:

Ethos implies also a relation with others to the extent that care for self renders one competent to occupy a place in the city, in the community or in interindividual relationships which are proper – whether it be to exercise a magistracy or to have friendly relationships. (From the interview with Foucault by Fornet-Betancourt et al. 1988: 7).

In order to analyse the dynamics of TP's work organisation, I build on Jarosz's observations in Washington State, examining whether what I call the disciplining and disciplined care prevalent in the weekly shifts and crucial in organising the work of the movement is the ethos of self-care described above, extended to the community. Is it a form of self-care that secures the continuity of friendly relationships and the balance of power? This requires looking more closely at a few manifestations of disciplining and disciplined care.

According to Foucault, following the Greek philosophers, care for the self – which implied the care for others – should exclude the domination of others by imposing power (Fornet-Betancourt et al. 1988: 8). A similar understanding of taking care of different pending and recurring issues in the organisation of the movement's work was widespread among its participants; however, in practice, there was a constant negotiation and balancing

between the 'proper' ethics of self-care in the Foucauldian (Greek philosophy) sense and what could be perceived as a selfish execution of individual power. In some cases, the constant tension was sustained because the chosen path of leaderlessness and horizontal governance often led to misunderstandings and disorganisation. For this reason, in each branch, there was always a person who was an 'unofficial leader' and executor of disciplinary care. Thus, it seemed that some people in each branch always cared more than others or, rather, the various participants adjusted the ethics of self-care according to their individual motivations and understandings of TP's values. Often the 'unofficial leaders', if they became overly disciplinary, were not perceived with affection by other branch participants. Sometimes only half-jokingly they were nicknamed *vagars* (serf-master), a character that was well known in the popular discourse on Latvian history in which the vagars was usually the person who oversaw the work of landless peasants and servants in German mansions of the past. Often the vagars was of Latvian descent and was therefore scorned by the peasantry as a 'traitor to their own kind'. Of course, it was not suggested that the movement's more unpopular 'unofficial leaders' were, by implication, likely to beat up other branch members, like the vagars, yet perceptions of the symbolic character or category of person the label indicates seemed relevant to attempts to normalise the existence and disciplinary acts of a 'leader'. The following example shows one of the ways an unofficial leader could execute power and the reactions it received in the branch.

Each branch followed a thoroughly crafted set of rules and recommendations detailing the specifics of every shift and the necessary work requirements of people on duty to secure their smooth running. These rules were usually listed in a Word or Excel document and, according to the internal agreement, kept in cloud storage, which could be accessed on becoming a member of a branch. The same rules were usually sent via email to new participants with an invitation to familiarise themselves with them, and sometimes the rules, as well as short reminders and explanations of the movement's central values, were also placed in the sorting and distribution location of the branch somewhere 'in front of the eyes'.

The rules mainly concerned very practical issues of work organisation and care for the produce to maintain it in the fresh state that the producer intended it to be when the consumer receives it. There were rules on how to handle the produce in the fridges and freezers, as every branch had at least one fridge. What should be done on arrival and before leaving the facility was also addressed, along with how money should be handled and stored.

When I became a member of one of the Riga branches, I automatically received the initial welcoming email, which included a list of rules. During my participation in the movement, a bit over three months, the 'unofficial leader' of the movement, Juta, frequently resent messages to the branch's email list in response to a breach of oversight of the rules; these contained links either to the whole set of rules or to excerpts. Other members of the branch commented that the tone of the emails was patronising and didactic, some blaming it on the fact that Juta was a teacher in her day job. Block capitals and red highlights were standard in these disciplinary emails. The same disciplining strictures were also dispensed in person when Juta was on duty or picking up her order. This pattern of 'more caring' was also sometimes adopted by a few other members of the branch. Mostly their behaviour was legitimated by the fact that they were long-term members and had been there from the movement's beginning, thus they probably knew how things should be done for the movement to function correctly. However, such radical execution of disciplining care was not standard; more often participants worked hard to secure a horizontal, inclusive and equal style of governance.

The rules were meant to facilitate what could be described as a consistent degree of disciplined care that would sustain the smooth operations of the movement. Similar attitudes and a sense of responsibility were encouraged within the branches when allocating the necessary number of shifts per participant to ensure their smooth and regular functioning; however, allocation of free dates even to the willing ones also needed to be disciplined. Most branches regularly created an Excel file of shifts (annually, half-yearly or quarterly) from which active members at the time were encouraged to choose two or three per quarter, on average. Yet every branch, both in Riga and the regions (eight branches altogether), that I visited during fieldwork

struggled with this enactment of the movement's voluntarism value. Indeed, unofficial leaders had to apply a range of disciplining strategies from begging to threats to encourage the participants to volunteer more, to be more responsible and to realise that without the voluntary contribution of time and labour, there would be no movement. As practice showed repeatedly in many branches, however, disciplining care was not the best way to secure the volunteer spirit among members, who rather saw it as an attempt to impose control and a forced call for collective work. This was a direct reminder or embedded in the discourse of social memory (if the participants were too young to have experienced the Soviet Union first-hand) of the communist culture of shared and equal labour.

This often unacknowledged and unvoiced silent resistance towards the element of volunteerism in the movement, manifest in the reluctance to undertake rostered shifts, took a toll on the very existence of several branches; some were already experiencing problems during my fieldwork while others dissolved later. These cracks and dysfunctions in securing the smooth continuation of the different branches of the movement demonstrate that the well-intended goals of the leaders to change members' perceptions of, and attitudes towards, voluntary work were not always attained. Perceptions of voluntary work merely as a disciplining and controlling tool to secure imagined communality, which stemmed from Soviet experiences, were patchworked with understandings appropriated from 'Western' ideals about building civil society through powerful civic activism (more in Chapter Seven). Muehlebach (2012) describes volunteerism, using ethnographic examples from Lombardy in Italy, as a form of identification for the neoliberal citizen. Such neoliberal volunteerism combines, as she notes, two impossible forms of human existence: one is the right of individuals to execute their personal freedom; another is the urge of a collective of the same individuals towards some collective greater good and solidarity. In its ideal form, volunteerism is an exchange of work (often care work – my addition) that ought to produce and reproduce affectionate relationships (Muehlebach 2012: 50). In the case of TP, these would take the form of friendship. However, as mentioned in Chapter Seven and above, in this chapter, attempts to build friendly relationships often failed in the everyday work of the movement. Concerning the

shortfall in volunteerism, the potential for friendly relationships was jeopardized by the patchworked and disharmonic perceptions of what voluntary work really means to each participant. The possibility of shared communal solidarity was overshadowed by the individuals' rights to execute the freedom to choose whether they wanted to care enough to sacrifice their time. Subsequently, self-care (as Foucault and Jarosz describe it) was often only exercised by more responsible and more caring individuals, and often against their free choice.

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Interpretation and analysis of the ethnographic material provided in this chapter indicate that layering, or patchworking, care practices borrowed from, and shared between, different spatiotemporalities and scales can help to overcome, shorten and mend the distances that are part of the work of small-scale alternative food provisioning systems. Of great importance in this regard is the ability of producers to adjust to the obstacles that are created by disrupted infrastructures, as in the case of roads, which can be viewed as a spatiotemporality that is empty of care from the state. Another vital aspect involves the producers' creativity, elasticity and ability to amplify the amount of caring energy that goes into working with and against the unpredictability of weather and climate in the logistics of the distribution process. Finally, the exercise of self-care among TP consumers was extended within the experimental self-governance of the movement by the application of disciplining and disciplined care; in this context, my ethnographic data demonstrate that this care possessed the characteristics of both affectionate, emotional connection and rhythmical, repetitive and instrumental organisation.

Chapter 10

Connection, disconnection and reconnection in the care through food

One week-day evening in November 2015, when I am staying with the Ozoli family, Ivars, the father of the family, begins cooking some organic quinoa and rice (both of foreign origin) to feed everyone. A bit later he holds up a bag containing two whole arctic chars, telling me that it is probably the most delicious of Finnish fish. I feel that he wants to establish some common understanding about today's dinner by referring to the country which has become my home. He tells me that his friend has an arctic char fishery; unfortunately, it is not organic because there is currently no infrastructure for such an initiative in Latvia. However, Ivars assures me that the fish are fed with special, expensive food from Finland and no antibiotics are used in their cultivation.

The kitchen fills with the strong smell of fresh fish as soon as they are taken out of the plastic bag. Ivars seasons them differently: one for the adults, with garlic, onion, dill and butter; the other for the kids, with salt, pepper, dill and butter. They are then put straight into the oven and, according to the recipe, should be ready in seven minutes. At the same time, Ivars switches off the gas under the quinoa. It is done. The rice continues cooking.

Around 17.15 Ivars calls his wife Jana to say that dinner is almost ready, and she needs to come home from the office, which is just around the corner. The youngest son, Augusts, who is two years old, runs into the kitchen with a pack of a kefirs (a sour milk drink which is a favourite accompaniment to meals in Latvia), saying in toddler language that he wants some milk. Ivars tries to convince the boy that it is not milk, even pouring him a bit in the glass. The child takes two sips and seems convinced. Meanwhile, Jana has arrived home, and Ivars and I have checked the fish once and decided it is not cooked yet.

Around 17.30 we check once more and again choose to cook it a bit longer.

Amidst the bustling cooking process, the five-year-old middle daughter, Luīze, storms into the kitchen and announces to mom that she has not eaten lunch. Jana does not hide her displeasure, and the tone of her response lies somewhere between surprised and rhetorical: 'How is that possible if dad was at home the whole day?'

The heat of cooking and family expectations of food is rising in the small kitchen. Little Augusts has dropped a serving fork and stands on it with his tiny feet. Nobody seems bothered. Both parents are overseeing the cooking process now and discreetly decide to snack on a few pan-fried new potatoes left over from the previous day, commenting that only grownups can eat these 'bad' (i.e., unhealthy) potatoes. We all know that we are trying to hide our hunger. The fish keeps cooking.

Around 17.50 the children are invited to set the table, but no one shows any eagerness to participate in this task. Jana does it quickly, proving how well she knows the job – the result of almost daily repetition. Finally, around 18:00, we all sit at the big table in the dining room and are about to start eating. Five-year-old Luīze looks at the oven-baked fish and says, 'That fish looks simply disgusting.' We eat. Each child has a bowl of rice next to their plates with the fish. All of them like rice with a squeeze of lemon and some fish sauce – butter with fish stock – which is limited; a squabble starts up, continuing until the last drop of the sauce is gone.

When dinner is over and the kids have left the table, Jana expresses her concern that such a meal will not keep them satisfied for long. It seems she is more than right. Less than two hours after the meal, Luīze announces that she is hungry. She gets a sandwich filled with TP sausage. By 21.00 all the children want to eat; they get meat or cheese sandwiches and Jana joins them with a sandwich of cheese and fresh sliced garlic. Ivars also has a couple of slices of bread with tahini, a few slices of cheese and three handfuls of fresh cranberries.

The culmination of TP goals and activities are the meals that end up on the tables in the houses of the movement's participants. The daily food practices of those whom I

observed, and the range of foodwork that they encompass, are the ultimate tasks of maintenance, repair and continuation that families carry out in intimate social settings. The entangled spatiotemporalities of care that I have described in the previous chapters wind up on the counters, in the fridges and finally on the family meal tables of the participant households. Thus, the daily eating events carried out in the family homes become the final and simultaneously a recurrent entanglement of care of marked with symbolic and practical significance. Indeed, my long-term ethnographic research into the eating practices of my field participants, brought it home to me very clearly that family food practices are an analytical entry tool to a better understanding of the social and economic workings of food provisioning practices – in this case, those associated with the TP movement.

This short ethnographic description provides a multi-layered resource for discussion, meanwhile effectively demonstrating that family meals proceed in ways that are only partially predictable and manageable, as well as being continually under construction. The depiction encompasses both imagined and real commensality, grazing, individual taste preferences, a shuffling between gendered foodwork and care and the power of children. It also shows that the family meal is a contextual and developing process that is navigated through the situated repetition and rhythms of everyday care work; meanwhile, the cumulative potential of such repetition and rhythmicity contributes to patchworked representations of intimately contextualised family meals.

I begin by joining the more general discussion of what is considered a *family meal* in social and cultural research (Gronow and Holm 2019; Holm et al. 2015; Murcott 2012, 1997; Douglas and Nicod 1974). This leads to the analysis of ethnographic material gathered through daily participant observation in the families. I focus on a few overarching patterns and events in everyday eating habits and family meals that could be regarded as representative of such essential themes as gendered and generational relationships. Specifically, I discuss three aspects of everyday food practices, starting with the gendered care balance in foodwork, thereby revisiting discussions presented in Chapter Six. I then address intergenerational care in the form of 'granny power'. The problem of grannies, the last Soviet generation, demonstrates that the

patchworks of care do not necessarily fit together; when care is unwanted and superfluous it can become a source of disconnection, mainly due to significant structural changes in the social, economic and political context in which the family lives of my participants are unfolding. Finally, I address another intergenerational aspect and underlying purpose in TP's maintenance and continuation, the feeding of the so-called 'organic child', drawing on studies by Cairns, Johnston and MacKendrick (2013) and Lammer (2017).

The family meal under construction

In 2012, Anne Murcott, a high-profile voice on the concept of the family meal in the social sciences of food research, revisited her infamous essay 'Family meals – a thing of past? (1997). In the original essay, she takes a critical stance when addressing the (presumed) demise of the family meal, focusing on the assumptions of those endorsing the meal's disappearance and the grounds for the argument (1997: 33). In her newest critical take on the vanishing family meal, Murcott (2012) expands this focus and addresses such perceptions in the broader paradigm of *moral panic*,[36] a term, overlapping with 'social anxiety', that has evolved in the social sciences along with fears of nuclear disaster and, currently, growing social anxiety over the anticipation of extinction and the ungraspable effects of climate change (catastrophe). While I do not examine the phenomenon of the family meal in the framework of moral panic/social anxiety in this chapter, I nevertheless side with Murcott's critical approach to this food practice and the notions of its 'disappearance'.

Murcott is not the only scholar to invite us to question the disappearance of something, in this case, the family meal, that perhaps has never actually existed (see also Jackson et al. 2009; Mestdag 2005); or, if it has existed, certainly does not fall into the category of a long-term Western tradition

[36] In her analysis Murcott refers to the aspects of moral panic addressed by Ungar (2001). Unger builds his definition of moral panic on the classical take on the term by Cohen (1972) who suggested that moral panic are periods in time in which societies find themselves in the moral panic that can be caused either by 'condition, episode, person or groups of persons' (1972:9). Today such period of moral panic can be associated with the climate change or anticipated climate catastrophe.

(one that is assumed to have lasted for several centuries in whatever homogenised West it implies). Consequently, the so-called family meal has been approached in academia as something that is an ideal and imagined imperative rather than a real, day-to-day practice (Murcott 1997, 2012). Concerning this study, two directions in meal research should be mentioned before I move onto the analytical sections: the first is led by researchers of everyday meals in Nordic countries, the second comprises anthropological inquiries into the family meal which are closely related to kinship studies.

In the last few decades, a significant contribution within the somewhat critical framework (depending on the specifics of the discipline of researchers involved) of everyday meal patterns and changes has been provided by Nordic social and cultural scientists. One of the most notable collections of work in this strand is Unni Kjaernes' edited volume, 'Eating Patterns: A Day in the Lives of Nordic Peoples' (2001). Researchers contributing to this comparative compilation provide a critical and immersive look at continuity and changes in everyday eating patterns (not just family meals) in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark, discussing vital aspects of meals such as the gendered division of cooking (Ekström and Furst). Lotte Holm addresses the concept and practice of the family meal, as well as social aspects of meal practices, while Finnish researchers (Mäkelä, Jääskeläinen, Gronow) focus on the rhythms and forms of meals and daily eating. Holm does not question the validity of the perception that something that we call a family meal is on the decline. Instead, she agrees with the findings of numerous studies from largely Western cultural space (for instance, Mäkelä on Finland; Murcott on the UK, Counihan on Italy, Haastrum and Holm on Denmark and DeVault on the USA) that family meals, both as an important concept and in practice, contribute to the social organisation (2001: 199-200). She pays more attention, however, to the changing appearances and enactments of what researchers studying the discourse of Western nuclear family-making call a family meal, highlighting Andersen's (1997) Danish study of 'eating-on-the-go', which is a similar concept to 'grazing'. According to Andersen, three decades ago restless, individualised eating practices, with family members eating separately in their own time and space, existed alongside regular family

gatherings around the table in Denmark. Adding to this, Holm notes that similar concerns have been circulating in Nordic eating space for a century, accompanied by national policies 'to save' and support the practice of shared meals (2001: 201). While focusing on changes in the notions and practice of the family meal, Holm does not avoid the critical approach suggested by Murcott (1997) and Ekström (1990), who both question the historical validity of the notion in the first place, and thus the necessity and legitimacy of the goal to return to it in the light of its demise (Holm 2001: 202-203).

Holm's Nordic study (2001; a survey conducted in 1997) has been revisited and compared in a new publication edited by Gronow and Holm (2019) in which the authors examine changes in meal habits (again not explicitly focusing on family meals) in Nordic space over 15 years (1997-2012). The focus of this research incorporates meaningful discussion of the individualisation, restructuration and informalisation of daily eating habits in the West that has been described by social scientists since the 1980s (for instance, Giddens 1990; Fischler 1988). The findings of Nordic researchers generally support these observations, showing, for instance, that lone eating *vs* commensality has increased, while the duration of meals has diminished (Gronow and Holm 2019: 4-7). More specifically, eating on the sofa has increased at the expense of meals around the table, while the concurrent use of mobile devices has become normal (Holm et al. 2015: 362-363). Holm et al. revisit the ambivalent approach to family meals in the social sciences, while acknowledging the universal character and historical importance of the phenomenon. The researchers choose to accept the premise that family meals have been considered or at least imagined to be a critical element of social organisation and nurturing, but, in line with this assumption, they also suggest that this importance, real or imagined, might have decreased in Nordic eating space (Holm et al. 2019: 78, 81).

These principal, yet by no means comprehensive, findings by Nordic researchers, combined with the critical paradigm promoted by Murcott, have helped me to craft my methodological approach to the everyday eating habits of the families participating in my research. The aim was to develop an open-minded analytical approach towards the family meal as a social phenomenon and apply it to raw

observations and experiences through participation in the inevitably frequent, if not regular, cooking and eating events in the households which hosted me. This has helped in tracing possible changes in domestic eating habits, manifestations of individualisation and informalisation, and structure and patterns in daily eating habits.

The second scholarly direction providing the theoretical background for my discussion is work by anthropologists (both long term and in the last few decades) interested in the family or kinship side of the concept and practice of domestic, everyday meals, with a particular focus on the reproduction of kinship through regular and festive meals that are often also repetitive and recurring food practices. This approach helps me to situate the forms of social relations maintained through caring foodwork in TP families and follow how participation in the movement and applying or not applying its values affects them.

In her seminal book, 'Heat of the Hearth' (1997), Janet Carsten writes that every house in the Malay fishing community of Langkawi, a focus of her long-term anthropological inquiries, had a hearth or *dapur*. Often several generations gathered around the dapur to celebrate the daily meal, although it was less crucial that all ate together than that the food they ate was prepared at the same hearth. The commensality that extended beyond the simple eating of food, one of the main elements of which was steamed rice, was also an essential part of continuing and reproducing kin through substance and socially. Women who executed their central role in the home – as well as the broader community, which could extend to the whole compound – by managing the hearth and feeding their kin, played an essential role in maintaining and continuing the house and hearth, which were synonymous (1997: 49-53). As has also been observed by feminist scholars working mostly in the Global North, however, Carsten observes that women often disliked the routine care work in the home, the cooking, washing and cleaning that has traditionally been ascribed to them. Instead, they would have preferred greater participation in agricultural work (which, according to the social hierarchy, was performed by older women) or to quit working at home as such (1997: 78).

Carsten sees food as a defining substance and facilitator of social relations and organisation in the holistic reproduction of kin. She writes that among the Malay people, blood, one of the substances that define kin, 'is formed in the body from the food cooked in the house hearth' (1997: 107). A house only becomes alive when a group of people maintain and sustain kin through everyday cooking and eating (1997: 108). On a more general level, Carsten also chooses to use the metaphor of 'relatedness', similar to Sahlin's 'mutuality of being', to go beyond the dichotomy of kin by blood or culture that has given rise to heated discussions in kinship studies up to the present (2000: 4). Throughout her research and writing process, Carsten has suggested that processes of 'personhood, relatedness, and feeding' are all intimately connected (1995: 224).

Similar observations about the role of women in reproducing and maintaining kinship through food and, most importantly, foodwork have been made by other anthropologists. David Sutton, for example, has provided an extensive and fascinating discussion of the importance of women in sustaining families in Kalymnos, Greece, in a study that focuses on the embodied skills of cooking as well as the importance of memory in passing the knowledge and meaning of everyday and festive food habits over the generations (for instance, 2001, 2004, 2007). Other anthropologists (e.g., Marte 2015; Pink 2004) have also addressed the importance of women in daily food preparation, the emplacement of the practice in the surrounding materialities and how the mutuality between the materialities and practice has shaped and contextualised women's care work through food.

Sarah Pink, working within the framework of the anthropology of the senses like David Sutton, emphasises the importance of sensorial and embodied experiences in food practices, through which, she suggests, gender is enacted in the spatiotemporalities of homes and kitchens (2004: 41). In line with the phenomenological approach that prioritises the role of individual experiences and agency, she notes that, based on her ethnographic material from the UK and Spain, the individual agency plays a vital role in shifting and adjusting 'gender configurations' in the home; at the same time, she contextualises this agency in the materialities of the home (ibid.). I do not agree entirely

with Pink's suggestions about the capabilities of individuals to affect domestic gendered configurations, however. The ethnographic material collected throughout my research demonstrates that individual agencies, especially within interrelated care settings such as families (see below), are contextualised continuously and adjusted not only in the intimate and negotiable spatiotemporalities of homes but also in fluid public discourses about the gendered division of care work, particularly care work involving food.

Lidia Marte, who works within the framework of feminist theory and decolonizing methodologies has addressed continuities and change in Dominican food practices in New York by using the mapping technique. She uses the materialities of the mapping process itself in creating drawn-by-hand maps of daily food routes, photos of plates, food narratives and so on (2015: 263). Marte stresses the importance of small scale in such a methodological and ultimately analytical approach, as it can help to trace the details of food practices in longer-term fieldwork among fewer participants (ibid.). I have been inspired by her approach and applied her suggestions about in-depth focus to a few participant families to trace the changes in their food habits, contextualised within the more significant change in emerging and shifting food provision systems in Latvia and globally. This approach has also helped me to locate, access and interpret generational shifts in family food habits among the participant families of TP.

Connection through gendered foodwork

In this section, I address the seemingly clear-cut gendered division in the foodwork of research participants, adding to the discussion I began in Chapter Six and questioning the 'obvious reality' of the division, using care as an entry point. In this I follow Andrea Meah (2017) who suggests applying the notion of care as a facilitator of relationships between parents (fathers, in her research) and children, thus overcoming the hurdles of established discourses (about the strict gendered division of housework in the Global North) in the social sciences that tend to restrict access to the lived everyday experiences of foodwork among household members. It was not surprising that, among the participants in my research, women perform routine care

work in the home more often than men (as also seen in Chapter Six); nevertheless, as the ethnographic description that begins this chapter indicates, in some families, the fathers' involvement in everyday food care work was almost as important as that of the mothers. Thus, as Meah shows in her research on divorcee fathers and their foodwork (2017: 11-12), the social context and circumstances often create spatiotemporalities of care that are unusual or absent in 'official' discourses of gender and foodwork. Meah's research also shows that, in any case, often such work is not perceived by its doers as gendered but, rather, as a meaningful activity that translates as care for the people they love (2017: 16).

On a more ideological level, parents in both consumer and producer families in my study were motivated by genuine care for their children when choosing to become a part of the food movement. They wanted the 'best' food for their offspring, which brings us to Joan Tronto's definition and discussion of care as a solely individualistic or dyadic act (Tronto 1993: 103). Referring to the often-raised example of childcare, Tronto shows that, whatever the society or cultural setting, there are rarely, if ever, cases when such acts are performed solely between mother and child, thereby creating a romanticised pairing of human interaction. Further, she adds, this dyadic perception of care also implies that it is an individualistic act on the part of the mother. However, ethnographic research from around the world shows that both individualistic (if breastfeeding can be regarded as such) and the more common social upbringing and nurturing of children is in place simultaneously in various social and cultural contexts (ibid.). Thus those who participate in the nurture and reproduction of kin through foodwork can be women (Carsten 1997: 50; Sutton 2001); in some cases, however, the role of cooking and feeding is shared between women and men both in non-Western social settings (see Weismantel 1995: 694) and within the shifting gendered foodwork settings of the West (Meah 2014; Meah 2017; Meah and Jackson 2013; DeVault 1991: 148-152).

Nevertheless, research, particularly on the division of time spent on foodwork in the Global North, has remained critical of men's involvement in routine housework (Wajcman 2015: 117) and therefore foodwork (Meah 2014). Several authors have specifically noted that even

though social conventions in the field of gender and foodwork relationality are changing, men are 'slow' to take on those parts of foodwork that remain routine and invisible 'care not-work' as described in Chapter Six. In terms of cooking and feeding, men (at least in the social settings of the Global North) have often been described as 'Sunday cooks' (Aarseth 2009; Warde et al. 2007) and as helpers rather than leaders in the daily foodwork (Murcott 1983; DeVault 1991). In this firmly established framework, stemming from feminist critical studies, few authors have drawn attention to men's accounts of their involvement in daily foodwork, and such research remains somewhat fragmented and minuscule (Meah 2014). Indicating possible directions for such research, however, is the work of geographer Andrea Meah (2017) (mentioned above), which addresses the intimacies daily foodwork creates between divorced/separated, part-time fathers and their children in northern England, with a focus on the caring dimension that contributes to men's 'doing'[37] fatherhood (2017: 2). While this does not accurately reflect the caring intimacies of fathering in settings in which both genders reside and care for children together rather than in turn, Meah's work draws attention to the often overlooked everyday contexts in which foodwork care can build and strengthen father/offspring relationships. My research also elicited observations about overall paternal emotional involvement in childcare through foodwork, although, as I discuss elsewhere in this work, their roles in this regard mostly remained those of 'helper' and 'Sunday cook'. The division of routine care work in the kitchens of my participants – both consumers and producers – remained largely unchallenged. Yet, as illustrated by Jana and Ivar's family, it could change quite quickly to adjust to rearrangements in a family's socioeconomic circumstances.

In the next section, I move from nuclear family domestic relationships involving foodwork to broader scale intergenerational dynamics – apparently afflicted by conflict and rupture – prevalent in TP families. This approach casts light on the positionality of grandmothers in the context of socio-economic and political change more generally, not only in Latvia but also in the wider post-

[37] The concept of 'doing gender' was coined by sociologists West and Zimmerman (1987) and alludes to the theorizing of gender as an ongoing social practice that is carried out in everyday life.

Soviet region. Drawing on my ethnographic material, I explore answers to the following questions: What role do grannies play in consumer and producer families? Are there differences between country and urban settings? Is the power of grannies in the food movement's participant families conducive to rupture and disconnection? Or are grannies and their experiences marginalised and made to look unworthy and incompatible with the new ways of eating organic and healthier food?

Disconnection by the power of granny?

One evening as we sit in Ivars and Jana's dimly lit, tiny kitchen, Ivars asks me whether I have read the article entitled, 'Grandma the poisoner'.[38] Apparently, the story was published in one of the editions of the monthly magazine, 'Rīgas Laiks' (Time of Riga), which is considered highly sophisticated and read by people who consider themselves part of the intelligentsia (the magazine is published both in Latvian and Russian). In the collective imagination that is created among us on that late evening while sipping red wine and feeling slightly woozy, it occurs to me that we indeed resemble one of those bohemian circles that regularly read the magazine and discuss its articles. At first, I chortle into a slurp of wine. I think Ivars is joking. He is serious. Briefly, he recounts that the article is about a grandmother who 'took care' of her family for decades by slowly adding small amounts of poison to their food.

It is hardly surprising that it initially seemed like a joke. In a popular discourse in Latvia and many other societies globally, grannies are generally regarded as the embodiment of faithful and unconditional love and care, in possession of the essence of wisdom, timeless affection and the unlimited desire to spoil their grandchildren.[39] My

[38] The original article *Grandma the poisoner* by John Reed was published in Vice on October 2014 https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/avywv4/my-grandma-the-poisoner-0000474-v21n10 last accessed 10.11.2018. The translated version *Mana oma, indētāja* was published in Rīgas Laiks, July 2015.

[39] My observations and research show that there might be differences between the roles and perceptions of maternal and paternal grandmothers in different societies. A common perception in societies of the Global North, including post-socialist spaces, is of a kind,

granny probably ticks at least several if not all these boxes. Yet it is also true that when it comes to food grannies play a unique role in caretaking through different food practices. Moreover, it is not surprising that the positionality of the granny is questioned, challenged and deconstructed in the paradigm of intergenerational family ruptures and continuity through different food practices. Thus, the symbolism of a *granny poisoner* should not come as a surprise at all. Instead, it might serve as an analytical entry point in localising the nature of granny power and accessing the generational dynamics of power relationships in families (Tiaynen 2013: 52).

In line with the continually changing nature of family meals, it is also useful to refer to the uniting and disconnecting potential of shared food; Maurice Bloch (1999), for example, underlines the importance of shared food throughout the time as the generations replace each other, noting that the intensity and probability of sharing the same substances with the same family members change as children grow up and become parents themselves. In the same manner, the social arrangements and power distribution managed through food can also become weaker or stronger (Bloch 1999: 139). Drawing on his long-term fieldwork with the Zafimaniry in Madagascar, Bloch provides an example of how commensality among close kin members carries the ambivalence of caring affection and danger of poisoning. He shows that among the Zafimaniry the need to distance oneself (to create new kin groups, for instance) from those who have provided one with nurture and food – the substances of affection – creates a deep fear that the same substances can turn out to be poisonous (1999: 145).

I find Bloch's observations helpful in addressing intergenerational relationships in the Ozoli family. For Ivars, the article in 'Rīgas Laiks' appears to serve as support to get him to open up and talk about how his mother exercises power through food and his awareness of the ambiguity of the foods and even food practices that continue to affect their family meals. Before turning to grandmothers, care and power in Ivars and Jana's family, however, I want to address the theme of grannies and food

warm maternal grandmother and a cold and sometimes crude paternal grandmother (e.g., the ethnography by Francis Pine on the Polish Highlands in Carsten ed. 2007).

in previous social and anthropological research, as well as briefly outlining the scope of such research in the Latvian context. While grandparents, in general, have regularly appeared in ethnographic accounts from across the world (see Carsten 1997; Strathern 1992; Sutton 2001), they have mostly been mentioned as significant but not the most prominent participants in the social organisation of kin. Grandmothers, on the other hand, have been a subject that has received particular attention in research on food and family making through processes of social becoming (Carsten 1995), embodied experiences through transmitting substances (such as milk, food in general, saliva, blood; see Carsten 1995, Seremetakis 1993) and bodily skills and knowledge dissemination (Sutton 2001; 2007; 2008).

Research on transnational families and generational life courses has been one of the main areas in which grannies and other elderly women members of families have received a certain amount of interest, including in the Baltic and narrower Latvian contexts (Bankovska and Siim 2018; Lulle 2018; Lulle and King 2016). Lulle (2018), for example, examines relational ageing by comparing the experiences related to practices of care of Latvian women who have migrated and those who stayed put. Lulle and King's (2016) research on 50 emigre women from Latvia aged 40-60 emphasises the role of these women in transnational care, disclosing that they are often the power centre of intergenerational care stretching to four generations. Bankovska and Siim, in their chapter of 'Translocal Childhoods and Family Mobility in East and North Europe' (2018), unravel the narratives of translocal taste buds of children adjusting to different localities, and the role that their grandparents' affection and care plays in this process.

The grandmother also features in studies examining historical change against the backdrop of Soviet and post-Soviet realities. Tatiana Tiaynen's PhD dissertation (2013), which comprehensively explores the trope of *babushka* (lit. granny) in transnational families living between Russia and Finland, points out that the concept of grandmothering and its enactment in emerging post-Soviet realities were not among the most noticeable and urgent issues of research interest in the place and time. Apart from Nancy Ries' work (1997) that, among other elements of the Perestroika

period, also addresses the phenomenon of the babushka, the gaze of researchers more often fell on other more pressing issues of 'transition' (Tiaynen 2013: 54-55). According to Tiaynen and Ries, the Soviet babushka must be viewed as a rather complex social construct and the enactment of a balance between gendered power and lack of power. Ries describes the babushka as a hero of survival who often cared for the whole family through the times of Perestroika (1997), while for Tiaynen babushka is an emic term, encompassing insider meanings of the phenomenon generated by the people of her research, unlike 'grandmother', which she regards as etic terminology. From the emic perspective, the term can encompass an elderly kinswoman who takes care of the family, whether she is the 'real' grandmother or not. This meaning can stretch to Russian folk perceptions about the power and significance of matriarchal wisdom in securing the smooth reproduction of kin and its values. On the other hand, Tiaynen stresses that, in light of her research, the term babushka must be viewed as embedded in and stemming from Soviet experiences that have been adjusted and subsequently transmitted to post-Soviet everyday life strategies (2013: 4-5).

I agree with Tiaynen that the perceptions and enactments of grandmothering (or babushka-ing in her case) must be viewed from a historical perspective, taking into account variation and overlaps in cultural meanings (Tiaynen 2013: 4). In Soviet Latvia, emic understandings of the babushka also became intertwined with pre-Soviet and local perceptions of *vecmāmiņa/ome* (granny and 'oma' – the German influence). Today, apart from this cultural overlap, perceptions and practices of grandmothering which are the subjective experiences of different ethnic and cultural groups living in Latvia are important. Tiaynen points out, for example, the cultural and life trajectory differences between babushkas of Ingrian Russian and Russian background (2013), whereas in my study differences between grandmothers of Latvian and grandmothers of Russian-speaking backgrounds – the two more prominent groups in the country – should be taken into account. On regaining independence, the central and most active aspect of distinction became language; (re)claiming cultural and, as Novikova points out, 'emotional boundaries' also became paramount (2005: 83). The Latvian-speaking community

continued to call their grannies vecmāmiņa or ome, thereby emphasising the necessity to return to and maintain pre-Soviet notions of the term, while Russian speakers retained the term babushka and the everyday enactment of the grannies' role can also be viewed as a continuation of the Soviet 'traditions' that the term encompasses (for more, see Novikova 2005).

Building on the Tiaynen's observations my ethnographic material shows that such clear-cut directionality and distinction must be viewed as one layer of coping with the massive social, political and economic change in the country during past decades. Meanwhile, a closer look at the layers of everyday practices shows that different etic and emic perceptions of vecmāmiņa/ome/babushka overlap and cohabit among the families of my research. The effects of socioeconomic and political change have also shaped perceptions of the importance and role of the grandmother in the new domestic constellations forming in the decades since the reinstatement of the independent state. Researchers have found that grannies and elderly women in general often lost their positions of importance and purpose due to limiting and devaluing state policies that followed different periods of sequenced change in post-Soviet space. Novikova (2002, 2005) has been following the dramatic downward turn in their role from that of superwoman with value in public as well as private spheres (Lakhtikova and Brintlinger 2019: 5), due to the rise of neoliberal and nation-state policy implementations and resulting adverse gender regimes and ideologies. In light of the crisis of 2007-2009, King and Lulle (2016) propose that the most significant constraint has been put on the women of the older generation (in their 60s) with Soviet working experience.

At the same time, the role of elderly women has also been negotiated on the private and kinship level. Research by Putniņa and Zīverte (2008) shows that among the different non-traditional family formations, special attention should be paid to the so-called grandmother/mother/grandchild (ren) families in which, in practice, the grandmother might be equal to the mother or even perform as the primary caretaker of the family. Nevertheless, the granny's importance in such family formations is not recognised as such by the state and even in the family itself she often remains in the shadows as her existence is seen as less

critical than the absence of the man (father). Alternatively, as Putniņa and Zīverte point out, very often grandmothers voluntarily become silent and invisible helpers, making 'a sacrifice' for their children and grandchildren by lessening their own importance (2008: 5, 8).

Changes in the positioning of older women who were part of the workforce in the Soviet era are reflected in the changing foodways of the younger generations. Novikova highlights this when describing the shift in the role of the granny and changing generational dynamics in the food practices in Russian-speaking families living in Latvia. She has observed that the younger generation from a Russian-speaking background in Latvia rejects its grandparents' fatty and calorie-rich foods (2005: 94). The fattiness of granny's food and her noncompliance with the family's healthier eating standards was also a common theme in the families of my stay. These conflicting and contradictory food habits became most visible at family gatherings, such as birthday and name day celebrations. State holidays and seasonal celebrations also served as fruitful grounds for observing the cohabiting of generational food preferences and contested tastes at the one table.

In Ivars and Jana's family, one of the most critical roles in the shared intergenerational food stories is assigned to Ivars' mother. On the evening described at the opening of this section, we are sipping wine and snacking on leftovers from the birthday party held that day, a substantial gathering of extended family and friends. Ivars goes on with the story about grandma the poisoner, saying that it reminds him strongly of summer visits to his mother, Velta, with his wife – then his girlfriend – some ten years earlier. He recalls that, as in the magazine story, every time they visited his mom they started experiencing weird symptoms of tiredness as the visits went on. They felt sluggish and heavy. Of course, Ivars does not suspect that his mom added any real poison to their food back then, as the author of the article implied about his grandmother, 'It was just the food itself. First, we always ate simply too much. Second, it was always too fatty, too heavy,' Ivars says while lingering in his memories. He thinks that Velta did it on purpose to make them stay longer, to keep them longer by her side.

Today Ivars admits that his food-mediated relations with his mother have affected the food choices he and his own

family make. First, he became a vegan as soon as he left home and he and his wife are now vegetarians, although they do not prevent their children from eating meat if that is what they want. Ivars and Jana say that they try to do everything precisely the opposite of how Velta would have done it. Nevertheless, Jana also admits without hesitation that Velta's food practices still affect them more powerfully than they would like. 'For instance,' Jana says in an almost confessional tone, 'the way I have nowadays taken over supervising the food practices in the family. I know that, in a way, I am continuing to execute the gendered role of the feeding mother (māte barotāja), like Ivars' mom with him and his siblings.' Jana did not feel that this was a worthwhile form of empowerment but, rather, a blunt demonstration of power and an elicitation of the 'wrong' kind of gendered roles. Here it must be recalled that Jana and Ivars' family saw themselves as a somewhat egalitarian and collaborative social union, applying various mutually respectful and inclusive relationship models in their everyday family practices. Ivars adds that today his mother has changed her ways; he does not know if they are any better, but they are certainly different, as she has been living in the USA for several years as has gone through her own dramatic food-related transformations: she was suffering from obesity and needed surgery to correct the size of her stomach. Ivars sounds ironic and remarks that overall, he sees it as a twisted turn for his mother as he remembers her stories of her childhood, which was marked by food scarcity and constant hunger. He sounds almost resentful as he concludes by observing how one person's road from rags to riches can have such a sour ending.

At Kalniņi farm, In Ieva and Jurģis' family, food-mediated relations with both maternal and paternal grandmothers also balanced between neutral, mutually exclusionary and respectful, and conflicting while I was living with the family. Usually, the differences about what the grandchildren should and should not eat were expressed in phone conversations between Ieva and her mother-in-law. Ieva's mom, on the other hand, seldom interfered with advice or suggestions yet, like Jurģis' mother, she always brought a controversial *ciemakukulis* (lit. the loaf that is brought when visiting someone – the food gift usually offered by visitors to hosts in Latvia) meant for children. Usually, these were fat and sugar-laden pastries and candies,

although sometimes fruit and vegetables. Often such offerings were considered instant food waste by Ieva, who commented, 'Nobody eats such things in this house. I do not know why she brought something like that again.'

As these brief ethnographic examples indicate, the importance of grannies cannot be overrated when trying to grasp, for instance, the changes in food practices across the generations represented by TP. The majority of the movement's consumers and producers are among the first generation growing up after independence. The food practices in these families have been exposed to all kinds of new influences, and participation in the movement can be considered a direct enactment of an ongoing change in food beliefs and practices in Latvia in the most recent decade of being an independent state. The vecmāmiņa/ome/babushka, on the other hand, embodies the past and all that it encompasses. More specifically, as I detail in the first part of this section, their heritage is a compilation of traditions affected by several changing ideological and state regimes. They are bearers of mixed knowledge and skills that can date from the period before the first occupation in 1940 (often obtained from elderly maternal family members) as well as more recent imprints from the years of Soviet rule. Some of them – like Velta, granny to the Ozoli consumer family – have also accumulated food skills obtained while living in the United States where she moved after she divorced Ivar's father and met her second husband, a descendant of a WWII Latvian refugee.

Furthermore, it could be said that even though grannies are not directly involved in the TP food movement, their enactments of care towards their kin affect domestic food practices on a more profound and at the same time less visible level. Moreover, as shown in the examples above, these care acts are often viewed as a representation of tension or conflict over food practices of choice.

Reconnection through the 'organic child'

The trope of the child is a powerful denominator in TP. Zita, the 'ideological' mother, and Elza, the 'doer' mother, both had new-born babies when they had the idea for the

movement and Zita's daughter likes to tell the story that her birth caused the birth of TP, which is not far from the truth. In my field encounters across the movement's branches, the well-being of children was frequently mentioned as one of the main reasons why people who started and those who later decided to join the movement were so motivated and contributed to its work so relentlessly. Indeed, at one of the seminars during the BioLoģiski campaign (see Chapter Five), Zita concluded by observing that the children of TP could be the first to grow up eating almost entirely organic food in today's independent Latvia. What does such a bold announcement say about the movement and its member families? Are they participating in creating a new kind of community by feeding their children organic food? Alternatively, is the movement an attempt to reconnect with the imaginary value systems of the past and, after reworking them, deliver them to the future?

The anthropological research on the feeding of children, the continuation of personhood or the social relations has been as significant as food practices which concern affiliation and exchange acts (marriage, Kula) and lifecycle rituals (birth, death, nurturing children and kin). When it comes to food practices and care, very often ethnographic accounts analyse the feeding of children as a complex combination of caring activities performed by and among the family and kin members (Wilk 2010; Carsten 1997; Weismantel 1995).

The practice of ethical food provisioning across the world is strongly gendered; women usually comprise the majority (mainly as consumers) of those taking part (Douzina-Bakalaki 2017, Cairns et al. 2013; Grasseni 2013; Jarosz 2011), something seen as an active manifestation of their caring, motherly natures (Cairns et al. 2013, Lammer 2017).

The ethical dimension of the practices of feeding and thus reproducing the family – which in most cases means raising children – is a relatively new aspect of research on everyday family food practices. Several authors concerned with gender, race and economic inequalities have argued that the ethical dimension can also be seen as a very exclusive and distinctive aspect of family meal research, as it has been associated with certain privileges when it comes to deciding and shaping everyday food practices (Cairns et al. 2013,

DeVault 1991, Wajcman 2015). Such privileges have been mainly linked to whiteness, education, class and economic wellbeing that are all, to some extent, associated with geographical positioning in the Global North. One must, however, remain aware of essentialisation and generalisation in research on ethical approaches in swiftly forming and expanding food provisioning practices across cultures and communities (see my discussion of 'alternativeness' in food provisioning practices in the Introduction). It is crucial to be attentive to differences in ethical representations of food provisioning, which may have a number of goals: overcoming austerity and establishing new forms of solidarity (Douzina-Bakalaki 2017; Rakapolous 2015); reaching out and mending the ruptures created by deep structural inequalities (Pratt and Luetchford 2014; Jarosz 2011; Kneafsy et al. 2008); or serving as 'ethical injections' in re-connecting food producers and consumers (Pratt and Luetchford 2014; Grasseni 2013; Kneafsy et al. 2008). Finally, specific ethical representations of food provisioning may enable ethical practices to be seen as epistemologically and culturally embedded in the 'normalities' of food provisioning in post-socialist spaces (Jung et al. 2014). Such normalities can be critically elicited in order to trace their situational and contextual manifestations.

To contribute to the discussion of ethical aspects of feeding and reproducing the family I apply the concept of 'organic child' coined by Cairns et al. (2013: 98)[40] to access the different layers of the discourse that emphasises the importance of children, one which is essential for maintaining and continuing TP's work. In their research, Cairns et al. address ethnographic material that presents the distinctive individualist responsibility of mothers in nurturing 'organic children' and a better future for the nation and planet (2013: 98). Even though the role and importance of women's care acts (including taking responsibility for feeding the family and children) in TP are undeniable (evidenced throughout this work), women and

[40] The concept of 'organic child' was developed by Cairns and Johnston based on their research on ethical consumption and motherhood. The idea of 'pure' and untainted children, protected from the effects of non-organic and unclean food, surfaced in many interviews they conducted with mothers involved in ethical food provisioning practices (Cairns and Johnston 2013: 98).

mothers also appear as leading performers of visible and invisible care work and not-work.

Meanwhile, my time spent with the participant families allowed me to observe the significant positionality and power of children (who are, ideally, to become 'organic') in structuring the family's food practices. In both my undergraduate and graduate research encounters, I have observed that what could be called the 'power of children' has become a defining aspect of family eating events across different social groups. Food anthropologist Sofia Boni, in her long-term research on Polish children and their eating habits and preferences, has observed that the current shift in the importance and value of children in families in the Global North (Wilk 2010; Alanen 2001) overlaps with the substantial cultural and socioeconomic changes in post-socialist spaces. Such changes, Boni argues, open space for children to test and execute their importance and subsequently power in the family through everyday food practices (2018: 395-396). Thus, for instance, a behavioural pattern that results in so-called 'picky eaters' (Wilk 2010; Jing 2000) shaped everyday meal dynamics in the families with whom I stayed and also featured in the interviews (often during one or another family meal event) in family homes. This very often meant that, regardless of the parental efforts to feed their children with 'pure' and organic food on a daily basis, kids often made their own food choices and shaped their eating patterns themselves. According to Boni, such contradictory and frequently competing understandings of what good food in parents' and children's perspectives is characterises the forming of children's food cultures (2015). The constant balancing between the two produces practices that combine the parents' desire for their children to follow an organic diet of healthy food items and children's 'real' choices. Parents' wishes materialised in the form of veggie stews, oven veggies, zucchini pancakes with cheese (either made on the farm or obtained through the movement) and so on. Children's own choices, however, were often reduced to organicity in the form of a bowl of organic pasta topped with a spoonful of organically sourced sour cream (*skābs krējums* similar to crème fraîche) or a pile of shredded organic cheese.

Children from producer families – more exposed to the vegetable-based diets in their daily lives as their families consumed their own produce – demonstrated greater understanding and higher consumption of food that is considered healthy in the popular discourse. On the other hand, children from consumer families, whose exposure to organic produce was restricted to the weekly purchases from TP by their parents more often executed their power against their parents' wishes as described above. Nonetheless, all the children from the three families of my long-term observation were rather knowledgeable about what is considered good food and what is not. For instance, none expressed a preference for McDonald's or similar fast food options although they had visited fast-food restaurants on occasion. Generally, children enjoyed eating fruit and vegetables, especially when they were prepared by their mothers and left with the children as they played. Fruit and vegetables were also eaten at mealtimes, especially by the older children in the farmers' families. Several times the children told me that TP or homegrown produce tastes better than shop-bought produce.

The raising of organic children was regarded by many parents as an opportunity to become more aware and educated about their own food practices, as I learned from my conversations with them during the home visits and while sharing duties on the distribution shifts. It was evident that the care that was invested in maintaining and continuing the movement also involved an element of self-care on the part of participants, demonstrated by their food knowledge and practices. The notion of self-care, [41] concerning alternative and ethical food practices, is a useful methodological and analytical tool for looking at consciously made lifestyle decisions (Jarosz 2011). Such self-care, Jarosz claims (2011: 319), is always both relational and outreaching (Tronto 1993); it also always involves care for others (see Chapter Nine). Thus, by caring for their children, mothers and fathers of the movement were simultaneously caring for themselves. Almost every consumer I interviewed expressed pleasure and excitement about how participation in the movement had changed and expanded their knowledge about ingredients, contributed

[41] I address Foucault's ethics of self-care in more detail in Chapter Nine.

to their growing interest in what they and their family are eating and improved their domestic and overall wellbeing.

Therefore, the existence and maintenance of the concept of the organic child as part of the bedrock of the movement must also be seen as important ideologically and instrumentally, highlighting the changes in food practices in the broader national context. The imaginary of a clean and better futurity inherent to the concept creates a space for reconnection on different levels. Firstly, it enables families to re-connect with the ideas and practices of family continuity, which might be ruptured and disconnected due to the shifts in value systems between my main field participants and their parent generation (see the section on 'granny power'). Thus, current parents are re-connecting with the continuation of certain family food practices by focusing on the wellbeing of their children and readjusting these practices through intergenerational consensus. Secondly, on a more general level, parents are re-connecting with perceptions of what is truly good and natural food by trusting the certified produce offered through the movement, thereby, on a symbolic level, re-connecting with feelings of belonging to the place and land they inhabit. Such re-connection unavoidably must be viewed in its temporal dimension, where the present is made through aspirations for a better future and re-connection to the collectively sustained imaginaries of past.

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The lack of care that was seemingly promoted by the disconnection resulting from generational food practices in the families of TP can also be seen as the enforcement of care by the generation with the main caring power in kin-making through food practices: the generation raising children. As parents, this generation was preoccupied with avoiding any possible harm that could be caused to their children through food. The dangers of 'poisoning' were detected on various levels, as this ethnography shows.

Firstly, parents were reconsidering the cultural heritage of their own parents and its possible 'harmful' influence on their children's food education. The aversion to, and rejection of, the experiences of the grandmothers'

generation were justified by their potential for cultural and nutritional 'dangers'. The current parents wanted to distance their own reproduction of family meal from those of the past (pre-WWII 'traditional' and Soviet). Thus, the disconnection in intergenerational caring patterns was seen mainly as a self-care for the closest kin members.

Secondly, by aiming to raise an 'organic child', the parents of TP were positioning themselves as people trying to escape the poisoning through food that happens on a much bigger scale on the level of contemporary agribusiness. Such avoidance and detachment from the greater mainstream food systems created a parallel, small-scale spatiotemporalities of care in which commensality over organic food was seen as a way of sustaining, maintaining and repairing a community through the substances it consumes.

Chapter 11

Conclusion

One of the most important questions to emerge in the early stages of my research for this project concerned the TP movement's obvious stability and longevity: What has enabled it to survive and continue its work against the backdrop of unstable and short-lived experiences of similar small-scale endeavours in alternative food provisioning in Latvia in last few decades?

Searching for answers to this, I have discussed several connected themes throughout this dissertation which contribute to previous debates about the relationships between alternative food provisioning and the ethics and practices of care. They also engage with the dissertation's overarching thesis which, building on the work by Kneafsy et al. (2008), proposes that, by attending to ethics and practices of care, it is possible to identify processes of reconnection, connection or disconnection between the different actors and social structures that sustain alternative food provisioning practices.

Early in this work, I introduced the metaphor of patchworking which I have applied throughout the analysis to assist in assessing and interpreting the reconnections, connections and disconnections within and between the spatiotemporalities of the care acts, care actors, environments and materialities of the TP movement; this has demonstrated that reconnections, in particular, involve a certain amount of nostalgia, variability and complexity, and must be viewed as ongoing processes. Furthermore, the study contributes to another general discussion in feminist and alternative food provisioning research (Wajcman 2015; Grasseni 2013; Mol et al. 2010; Tronto 1993; DeVault 1991), one concerning the invisibility and embeddedness of ethics and practices of care in the foodwork of small-scale food initiatives. Based on my ethnographic material I show that these two features of routine care work are also present in all stages of food provisioning in alternative food systems

such as TP. These findings augment discussions about gendered care work: about the dynamics between care and its absence at different scales of social organisation, such as kin, the community of the TP movement, controlling institutions, the state and transnational standardisation bodies (such as EU certification); and about care as a complex system of moral and practical elements involving affection, economic interest, discipline and responsibility.

Furthermore, I have drawn attention to less researched aspects of care, and innovative approaches to small-scale food provisioning practices, such as the relations between care and time (following Puig de la Bellacasa 2017) which transcend more general discussions in the social sciences on labour/time connections (see below); relations between care and creativity; and innovation as embodied skill. I have also explored understandings of what care can and cannot be (Mol et al. 2010; Tronto 1993); the relationships between care and discipline as a form of extended self-care (Jarosz 2011; Foucault 1977), thereby underlining the necessary relationality that care acts imply; and the embeddedness and role of such disciplining and disciplined care in the food provisioning practices displayed in the TP movement.

This study has shown that care that has traditionally been invisible is still very much so, yet its enactments do not touch only upon the richly discussed gender divide in feminist literature to date. Forms of deeply embedded and seldom acknowledged care were present in almost all stages of food provisioning in the TP movement, involving not only female and male participation but also non-humans, environments and materialities. Moreover, the manifestations of such embedded and invisible care – depending on the contexts of food production, distribution and consumption – also involved different combinations of affection, obligation, responsibility, creativity and economic interest.

In Chapter Six, I unpacked the ultimate invisibility of care, analysing its various implications in forms I termed 'care not-work'; these were revealed by addressing the ultimate stage of foodwork in households, the dishwashing. Unsurprisingly, I conclude that dishwashing, on the one hand, is a very gendered part of foodwork, reinforcing the problematic situation of women performing routine care

not-work in kitchens more than their male counterparts; on the other hand, the importance attributed to a possible change in attitudes regarding this care division in households might signal the dawning recognition of such 'care not-work' and, in consequence, add value to it.

It is a discussion I continue in Chapter Ten when I address gendered connections through care foodwork in the stages of cooking and feeding. By embedding the analysis of my ethnographic research in anthropological and sociological discussions about family eating practices such as the family meal (Gronow and Holm 2019; Holm et al. 2015; Murcott 2012; 1997), I demonstrate that cooking and feeding family and kin as an expression of care for their wellbeing and a form of social reproduction was less gendered and rather more contextually ordered than, for instance, dishwashing. I also show that gendered and generational connections and disconnections in the households of my participants – such as food practices directed at producing the 'organic child' (Lammer 2017; Cairns, Johnston and MacKendrick 2013), and the (dis)empowerment of grannies (Tiaynen 2013; Novikova 2005) – overlapped and strongly affected kin power relations and dynamics more broadly in terms of the everyday ethics of caring through food practices.

In Chapters Eight and Nine, I continue the discussion on the deep embeddedness of care acts as embodied, creative, affective and economic aspects of food production and distribution. In Chapter Eight, I show, through detailed descriptions of production on the Kalniņi and Saulīši farms, that care on farms is sometimes hard to recognise as it has both economic and affectionate roots; thus, by acknowledging its economic importance in small-scale organic production it is easier to grasp the extent of the relationality of care for humans, for non-humans and for the environments they inhabit. Chapter Nine examines whether care can be both affectionate and disciplining at the same time by describing the TP's rules and norms and their enactment in the weekly sorting and distribution work shifts, concluding that discipline is a necessity in organising the care work in small-scale food provisioning practices of this kind. My observations also indicate that discipline in close-knit community provisioning should be balanced with a certain amount of affectionate care that in the TP was promoted as the value of friendship and friendliness.

In Chapter Nine, I engage with another discussion to which this study contributes, which concerns whether the ongoing care or absence thereof at the different scales impacting on TP affected the movement's inner work as well as its contextualisation in the wider framework of economic, political and social relations in Latvia and globally. Also, of importance was whether the constant movement and mutuality between scales ensured that some form and adequate amount of care was always present in all stages of food provisioning in the movement. More explicitly I show that much of the constant care work on the part of the organic farmers was required in order to compensate for the absence of care from the state, exemplified by the badly maintained road infrastructure. In the same chapter, I also outline the flexibility and creativity that is likewise needed to perform the care required by the logistics of organic food provisioning in the shape of the less known care acts of harvesting, delivering and distribution.

In Chapter Seven, I examine and describe aspects of reconnection in alternative food provisioning initiatives that demonstrate the 'new ethics of care' or 'ethics of care in the making'. These manifested in the TP movement as a constant questioning of the movement's value system and resulted in the long-term gains of building internal and external relationships and better organisation. In the course of the two developments, the three values of friendship/friendliness, organicity and volunteerism were constantly negotiated and redefined among the movement's participants, mainly its consumers and producers. These three values, as I show in Chapters Seven and Nine, were patchworks of ethics and practices of care that connected public and individual perceptions of what is worth caring about and for. One example of such patchworking was represented in the building and maintaining of vertical relationships between consumers (although the 'leaders' of the movement never admitted to the existence of such vertical structure and contested this notion whenever they could) and horizontal connections in the weekly work of the shifts. During the shifts the values of friendship and volunteerism were renegotiated and implemented through activities on several levels, including the equal participation in shifts by all members and common agreement on the duties involved and that they should be well-executed. Weak versions of friendliness

resulted in a certain amount of distrust among shift participants.

Meanwhile, differing perceptions of what properly comprised organicity were a common source of conflict and disconnection in producers' relationships with official organic farming representatives in Latvia, such as the LBLA, or controlling institutions, including certification entities or the food safety and quality controlling organisation (PVD). Caring relationships between producers and consumers were also only in an incipient stage of formation and were often viewed by farmers with a certain amount of caution and suspicion. Likewise, a prevailing disconnection remained among producers themselves due to an inability to trust each other, and a failure to extend self-care towards beneficial collaboration models: this problem was often conveniently ascribed to the solitary and non-collaborative 'nature' of Latvian peasants by my research participants.

Finally, this research demonstrates the close relationship between care and time in the various forms which have been proposed by social scientists (Bear 2016, 2014; Guyer 2007; Massey 2005; Verdery 1999; Munn 1992). Building on previous work I apply and discuss the relationships between care and capitalist or productionist time, historical time, the temporality aspect of spatiotemporalities (especially in Chapter Two) and tempos and rhythms.

There is well-recognised research in anthropology, sociology and feminist studies on the relationship between work and time, such as Laura Bear's (2016, 2014) work on time and capitalism and that of Judy Wacjman (2015) who analyses relationships between time, work and technological advancement. However, there is very little to be found in anthropological literature about the direct relationship between care and time. An important explanation for that could be the marginalised and taken-for-granted role of care in ethnographic accounts, leading to its remaining rather an abstract and almost timeless mode of existence that is entwined with other everyday acts – often labelled unpaid care work, invisible care work and so on – performed in communities. As I have noted, care as an important vehicle of social reproduction and maintenance, for instance through food, is a given of human existence, yet it has not been much approached in its

everyday relationships with the management of time in the different aspects of foodwork. My dissertation contributes to a discussion partly initiated by Puig de la Bellacasa (2017: 206) on the care for the soil in alternative food provisioning practices. Several feminist researchers (see Singlton and Law 2013; Mol et al. 2010) have also paid attention to care time or 'making time' for care (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 206) in the other repetitive and rhythmical everyday tasks which I have described in this work. My findings agree with the research by these scholars which emphasises that careful management and valuation of various aspects of time (linearity, fragmentation, slowness, messiness, rhythms and tempos) in small-scale food provisioning systems is paramount.

I show that time, or perceptions and interpretations of historical time, contribute to the repair and maintenance of the ideas and values of the movement and also to the patchworked forms of everyday food practices in the households and while performing weekly shifts. I also demonstrate the role and capacity of time in providing recognition and value to the invisible care activities that weave through the everyday foodwork. Finally, I highlight the relationships between time and care on the farms, which are demarcated by the tempos and rhythms of food production, harvesting and deliveries. At the same time, I attend to the slowness and often messiness of such time, showing that exact and repetitive rhythms and tempos coexist in the 'tinkering' of care and 'taking time' for care, which sometimes acts against time or 'trick time': 'jumping over' time or catching up with its due, for instance, to the unpredictability of the weather or infrastructures. This dissertation is an explorative start to tracing and interpreting the different angles in care and time relationships that can be encompassed in the concept of 'care time'. Further research into this relationship – not only in the area of food provisioning practices but in all spheres of life where care plays an important role – is much needed.

In conclusion, the various manifestations of care that are described in this dissertation create, maintain, repair and promote the spatiotemporalities of the life that is lived by the various participants of the TP food movement. In the case of TP, such spatiotemporalities are situated in the patchworked connections of discourses of 'past', 'present'

and ‘future’. As seen from the example of the movement, that can be a source of strength and continuity, but it requires the intuitive navigation skills and sensitivity seen, for instance, in the TP’s participants’ ability to create space for multiple registers of care and the constant extension of self-care through reaching out. The importance of the temporal aspects of these spatiotemporalities lies in their ability to highlight the capacity of care to create everyday life strategies that will be useful in the rapidly accelerating situation of climate emergency. By that, I mean that, by noticing and acknowledging ‘care time’ and taking it seriously, alternative food movements today and in the future could work alongside and beyond the unpredictability of the future that awaits conventional, industrial, large-scale food systems.

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